

MEDITATIONS

AND

CONTEMPLATIONS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

Containing,

VOL. I.

MEDITATIONS among
the TOMBS; *And*
REFLECTIONS on a
FLOWER-GARDEN.

VOL. II.

CONTEMPLATIONS on
the NIGHT; *And*
CONTEMPLATIONS on
the STARRY HEAVENS.

By *JAMES HERVEY*, A. B.

Late of Lincoln-College, Oxon.

THE SECOND EDITION.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

Printed for JOHN and JAMES RIVINGTON,
at the Bible and Crown in St. Paul's Church-
Yard; And J. LEAKE, at Bath.

M DCC XLVIII.

145
29

MEDITATIONS
AND
CONTINUATIONS

IN TWO VOLUMES



BY JAMES HEWITT, A.B.

VOL. II

LONDON

Printed by J. B. L. ...

MDCCLXIII



T O
PAUL ORCHARD,
O F
Stoke-Abbey, in Devon, Esq;

Dear SIR,



S your honoured Father was pleased to make Choice of me, to answer in your Name at the Font, and to exercise a Sort of Guardianship over your spiritual Interests; permit me, by putting these little Treatises into your Hand, to fulfil some Part of that solemn Obligation.

GRATITUDE for many signal Favours, and a *conscientious* Regard to my

bottom

A 2

sacred

sacred Engagement, have long ago inspired my Breast with the warmest Wishes, both for *your* true *Dignity*, and real *Happiness*. Nor can I think of a more endearing, or a more effectual Way, of advancing either the one or the other, than to set before you a Sketch of your excellent *Father's Character*.—Illustrious Examples are the most winning Incitements to Virtue: And none can come attended with such particular Recommendations to you, as the Pattern of that worthy Person, from whom, under a gracious God, you derive your very Being.

A most cordial and reverential *Esteem* for the *Divine Word* was one of his remarkable Qualities. Those Oracles of Heaven were his principal Delight, and his inseparable Companions. Your Gardens, your solitary Walks, and the Hedges of your Fields, can witness, with what an unwearied

DEDICATION.

v

wearied Assiduity He exercised Himself in the Law of the LORD. From hence He fetched his Maxims of Wisdom, and formed his Judgment of Things. The sacred Precepts were the Model of his Tempers, and the Guide of his Life ; while the precious Promises were the Joy of his Heart, and his Portion for ever.

IMPROVING Company was another of His most relishing Pleasures. Few Gentlemen were better furnished, either with Richness of Fancy, or Copiousness of Expression, to bear a shining Part in Conversation. With these Talents He always endeavoured to give some useful, and generally some religious, Turn to the Discourse. Nor did He ever reflect, with greater Complacency, on His social Hours, than when they tended to glorify the eternal Majesty, and to awaken in Himself and others a more lively Spirit of Devotion.

vi *DEDICATION.*

To *project* for the *Good* of *Others*, was His frequent *Study*; and to *carry* those benevolent Contrivances into *Execution*, His favourite *Employ*. When visited by the young Persons of the Neighbourhood, far from taking an ungraceful Pride to initiate them in Debauchery, or confirm them in a riotous Habit; it was His incessant Aim, by finely-adapted Persuasives, to encourage them in Industry, and establish them in a Course of Sobriety; to guard them against the Allurements of Vice, and animate them with the Principles of Piety. A noble Kind of Hospitality this! which will probably transmit its beneficial Influence to their earthly Possessions, to their future Families, and even to their everlasting State.

A CONVICTION of human Indigence, and a thorough Persuasion of the Divine All-sufficiency, induced Him to be frequent
in

DEDICATION. vii

in Prayer. To prostrate Himself, in profound Adoration, before that infinitely exalted Being, who dwells in Light inaccessible, was his Glory; to implore the Continuance of the Almighty Favour, and the Increase of all Christian Graces, was his Gain. In those Moments, no doubt, He remembered you, Sir, with a particular Earnestness; and lodged many an ardent Petition in the Court of Heaven, for His infant Son. Cease not to second them with your own devout Supplications, that they may descend upon your Head, “in the
“ Fulness of the Blessings of the Gospel
“ of Peace.”

To give their native Lustre to all His other Endowments, He was careful to maintain an *humble Mind*. Though his Friends might admire His superior Abilities, or his Acquaintance applaud His exemplary Behaviour, He saw how far He

fell short of the Mark of His high Calling: saw, and lamented his Defects: saw, and renounced Himself; relying, for final Acceptance, and endless Felicity, on a better Righteousness than His own; even on the transcendently perfect Righteousness, and inconceivably precious Death, of JESUS the Redeemer. This was the Rock of his Hope, and the very Crown of his Rejoicing.

THESE, Sir, are some of the distinguishing Characteristics of your deceased Parent. And, as you had the Misfortune to lose so valuable a Relative, before you was capable of forming any Acquaintance with his Person, I flatter myself, you will the more attentively observe his Picture, This His *moral Picture*; designed, not to be set in Gold, or sparkle in Enamel, but to breathe in your Spirit, and to live in all your Conduct.—Which, though it be intirely

DEDICATION. ix

tirely your own, calculated purely for yourself, may possibly, like the Family-Pieces in your Parlour, that glance an Eye upon as many as enter the Room, make some pleasing and useful Impression on every Beholder. — May Every-one, charmed with the beautiful Image, catch its Resemblance; and each, in his respective Sphere, “go
“and do likewise.”

BUT you, Sir, are peculiarly concerned to copy the amiable Original. As the Order of an indulgent Providence has made you Heir of the *affluent Circumstances*, let not a gay and thoughtless Inadvertence cut you off from the *richer Inheritance* of these noble Qualifications. — These will be your Security amidst all the glittering Dangers, which are inseparable from blooming Years, and an elevated Situation in Life. These are your Path, your sure and only Path, to true Greatness, and solid Happiness. —

Tread

x *DEDICATION.*

Tread in these Steps, and you cannot fail of being the Darling of your Friends, and the Favourite of Heaven. Tread in these Steps, and you will give inexpressible Joy to one of the best of Mothers ; you will become an extensive Blessing to your Fellow-Creatures ; and which, after such most engaging Motives, is scarce worthy to be mentioned, you will be the Delight, the Honour, and the Boast of,

Dear Sir,

Your most affectionate Godfather,

7 OC 63

And faithful Humble Servant,

Weston-Favell,
July 14.

1747:

JAMES HERVEY.

CONTEMPLATIONS
ON THE
N I G H T.

*Night is fair Virtue's immemorial Friend;
The conscious Moon, through every distant Age,
Has held a Lamp to Wisdom.*

Night Thoughts, N^o. V.





The A R G U M E N T.

A Delightful Evening Walk; the unmolested Enjoyment of such Pleasures owing to our late Victory over the Rebels. — The setting Sun; Twilight; serious Consideration — The dewy Coolness; its beneficial Influence on Nature; Returns of Solitude equally useful to Man — Angels our Spectators, and GOD ever present — The profound Silence — The universal Cessation of Business — The Day ended; the Swiftnefs, the Shortnefs of Time; the Work to be done while it lasts; to squander it away, the most destructive Extravagance — Darknefs; the obliging Manner of its taking Place; wild Beasts of the Desert, and Savages in human Shape, make use of this Opportunity — Darknefs renders the least Spark visible, and at the same time snatches from our Sight all the lovely Distinctions of Things — Sleep; its cheering Nature; the Gift of Heaven; the fine Preparatives for its Approach; the Kindness of Providence in guarding our Slumbers — Dreams; their unaccountable Oddness; many Peoples waking Thoughts

Thoughts no less chimerical—Ghosts; our unreasonable Timorousness on this fanciful Occasion; the true Object of Fear; the Reality and Design of Apparitions, deduced from a Passage in Job—The Owl; its gloomy Disposition; the Unholy incapable of relishing the Delights of Heaven—Owl screaming, supposed to be a Token of Death; the many real Presages of this great Change; Preparation pointed out and pressed—The Nightingale; her charming Song; entertains the Lovers of Retirement; how to have a sweeter Melody in our own Breasts—The very different Circumstances of Mankind, particularly of the Gay, and the Afflicted; Address to the Devotees of Mirth and Sensuality—The Glow-worm and Ignis fatuus; the Pleasures of the World, and Powers of unenlightened Reason—A Comet; imagined to be the Forerunner of Judgments; Licentiousness abounding in a Nation, a much more formidable Omen; the Distemper among the Cattle—Northern Lights; the Panic they occasion; the general Conflagration—The Moon rising; brightens as she advances; such should be our moral Conduct—Moon opens a majestic Scene; how worthy our Admiration—Moon shines with derivative Light; Christians receive their All from their Saviour—Moon always varying; the Things of this World liable to perpetual Vicissitudes; our own Righteousness unequal and imperfect,

The ARGUMENT.

XV

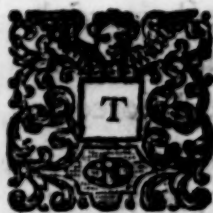
imperfect, our Redeemer's complete and always the same—Moon under an Eclipse; gazed at by Multitudes; the Faults of eminent Persons seldom escape Observation—Moon reflected by the Ocean; the Virtues of Persons, in distinguished Stations, influential on others—Moon actuates the Sea; the everlasting Joys of Heaven attract and refine the Affections.



CON-



CONTEMPLATIONS ON THE N I G H T.



THE Business of the Day dispatched, and the sultry Heats abated, invited me to the Recreation of a *Walk*: A Walk, in one of the *finest Recesses* of the Country; and in one of the most *pleasant Evenings*, which the Summer-Season produced.

THE Limes and Elms, uniting their Branches over my Head, formed a *verdant Canopy*, and cast a most refreshing Shade. Under my Feet lay a *Carpet* of Nature's *Velvet*; Grass intermingled with Moss, and embroidered with Flowers. *Jeffamines*, in Conjunction with *Woodbines*, twined around the Trees, displaying

ing their *artless Beauties* to the Eye, and diffusing their *delicious Sweets* through the Air. On either Side, the Boughs, rounded into a Set of regular Arches, opened a View into the *distant Fields*, and presented me with a Prospect of the *bending Skies*. The little Birds, all joyous and grateful for the Favours of the Light, were paying their Acknowledgements in a *Tribute of Harmony*, and soothing themselves to Rest with Songs. While a French-Horn, from a neighbouring Seat, sent its melodious Accents, softened by the Length of their Passage, to complete the *Concert of the Grove*.

ROVING in this most agreeable Manner, my Thoughts were exercised on a Subject, more delightful than the Season, or the Scene. I mean, our late *signal Victory* over the united Forces of *intestine Treason*, and *foreign Invasion*. A Victory, which pours Joy through the present Age, and will transmit its Influence to Generations yet unborn.—Are not all the Blessings, which can in dear Society, or render Life itself desirable, centered in our present *happy Constitution*, and *auspicious Government*? And were they not all struck at by that impious and horrid Blow, meditated at *Rome*, levelled by *France*, and seconded by factious Spirits at *Home*? Who then can be sufficiently thankful for the gracious Interposition

of

of Providence, which has not only averted the impending Ruin, but turned it, with aggravated Confusion, on the Authors of our Troubles?

METHINKS, every Thing *valuable*, which I possess, every Thing *charming*, which I behold, conspire to enhance this ever-memorable Event. To this it is owing, that I can ramble unmolested along the Vale of *private Life*, and taste all the innocent Satisfaction of a *contemplative Retirement*.—Had Rebellion succeeded in her detestable Designs, instead of walking with *Security* and *Complacency* in these flowery Paths, I might have met the *Affassin* with his *Dagger*; or have been obliged to provide for my Safety, by abandoning my *Habitation*.—Farewel then, ye fragrant Shades, Seats of Meditation, and calm Repose! I should have been driven from your *loved Retreats*, to make Way for some *insulting Victor*. Farewel then, ye pleasing Toils, and wholesome Amusements of my rural Hours! I should no more have reared the tender *Flower* to the Sun; no more have taught the *Espalier* to expand her Boughs; nor have fetched, any longer, from my *Kitchen-Garden*, the purest Supplies of Health.

HAD Rebellion succeeded in her detestable Designs, instead of being regaled with the *Music* of the *Woods*, I might have been alarmed with the Sound of the Trumpet, and all the Thunder

of War. Instead of being entertained with this *beautiful Landſcape*, I might have beheld our Houſes ranſacked, and our Villages plundered ; I might have beheld our fenced Cities encompaſſed with Armies, and our fruitful Fields “ cloathed with Deſolation ; ” or have been ſhocked with the more frightful Images of “ Gar-
“ ments rolled in Blood,” or of a Ruſſian’s Blade reeking from a Brother’s Heart. Inſtead of *Peace*, with her chearing Olives, ſheltering our Abodes ; inſtead of *Juſtice*, with her impartial Scale, ſecuring our Goods ; *Perſecution* had brandiſhed her Sword, and *Slavery* clanked her Chains.

NOR are theſe Miſeries imaginary only, or the Creatures of a groundleſs Panic. There are in a neighbouring Kingdom, who very lately experienced them in all their Rigour *. And, if the *malignant* Spirit of *Popery* had forced itſelf into our Church ; if an *abjured Pretender* had cut his Way to the Throne ; We could have no Reason to expect a Mitigation of their Severity on our Behalf.—But, ſuppoſing the tender Mercies of a bigotted Uſurper to have been ſomewhat leſs cruel ; yet where, alas ! would have been the *Encouragement* to cultivate our little Portion ;

* See a Pamphlet, lately publiſhed, and intituled, *Popery always the ſame*.

Portion ; or what *Pleasure* could arise from an improved Spot ; if both the one and the other lay, every Moment, at the Mercy of *lawless Power* ? This imbittering Circumstance would spoil their Relish ; and by rendering them a *precarious*, would render them a *joyless* Acquisition. —In vain might the *Vine* spread her purple Clusters ; in vain be lavish of her generous Juices ; if *Tyranny*, like a ravenous Harpy, should be always hovering over the Bowl, and ready to snatch it from the Lip of *Industry*.

LIBERTY, that dearest of Names, and *Property*, that best of Charters, give an additional, an inexpressible Charm, to every delightful Object.—See, how the declining Sun has beautified the *western Clouds* ; has arrayed them in Crimson, and skirted them with Gold. Such a Refinement of our *domestic Bliss*, is *Property* ; such an Improvement of our *public Privileges*, is *Liberty*. When the Lamp of Day shall intirely withdraw his Beams, there will still remain the same Collection of floating Vapours ; but O ! how changed, how gloomy ! The Carnation blushes no more ; the golden Edgings are gone ; and all the lovely Tinges are lost, in a leaden-coloured louring Sadness. Such would be the Aspect of all these *Scenes of Beauty*, all these *Abodes of Pleasure*, if exposed continually to the

6 CONTEMPLATIONS

Caprice of *arbitrary Sway*, or held in a State of
abject and *cringing Dependence*.

BUT, while I am musing, the Shadows
lengthen *: The *Sun* falls lower; his Orb,
upon the Point of setting, grows *broad*; like
Mercies, little prized, while *possessed*; but greatly
esteemed, and bitterly regretted, the very In-
stant they are *lost*.—He is now sunk beneath the
dusky Earth, and totally disappears. For a
while He *bequeaths* Us his *Beams*, though Him-
self is withdrawn. But, like all the other Blef-
sings which his Eye beholds, they are a very
transitory Legacy. See, how faintly they tremble
in the Sky. Their Vivacity decays every Mo-
ment. They can no longer hold their Station.
While I speak, they expire; and resign the
World to the gradual Approaches of Night.

— Now Twilight grey
Has in her sober Liv'ry all Things clad.

MILT.

EVERY Object, a little while ago, *smiled*
with Light; but now All appears under a more
qualified Lustre. The Animals harmonize with
the insensible Creation; and what was gay in
those,

* *Majoresque cadunt altis de Montibus Umbrae.*

VIRG.

those, as well as *glittering* in this, gives place to an universal *Gravity*. In the Meadows, all was jocund and sportive; but now the gamefome Lambs are grown weary of their Frolicks, and the tired Shepherd has imposed Silence on his Pipe. In the Branches, all was Sprightliness and Song; but now the lively Green is wrapt in the descending Glooms, and no *tuneful Airs* are heard, but only the *plaintive Stock-dove*, cooing mournfully through the Grove.—Should I now be vain and trifling, the Heavens and the Earth would rebuke my unseasonable Levity. Therefore be these Moments devoted to Thoughts, *sedate* as the closing Day, *solemn* as the Face of Things. And, indeed, however my social Hours are enlivened with *innocent Pleasantry*, let every Evening, in her sable Habit, toll the Bell to *serious Consideration*. Nothing can be more proper for a Creature that borders upon Eternity, and is hasting continually to his final Audit, than daily to slip away from the Circle of Amusements, and frequently to relinquish the Hurry of Business, in order to consider and adjust “the Things that belong to his Peace.”

AFTER all the Ardors of the sultry Day, how reviving is this *Coolness*! This communicates new Vigour to the infeeble Animals, and

new Verdure to the withering Plants. By this the Air also receives a new Force, and is qualified to exert itself with greater Activity. This I might call the grand *Alembic* of *Nature*, which distils her most sovereign *Cordial*, the refreshing *Dews*, *Incessant Heat* would destroy the pearly Drops, or oblige them to evaporate in imperceptible Exhalations. *Turbulent Winds*, or even the gentler Motions of *Aurora's Fan*, would dissipate the rising Vapours, and not suffer them to come to a Coalition. But, favoured by the Stillness, and condensed by the Coolness of the Night, they form that *finely-tempered Humidity*, which cheers the vegetable World, as Sleep exhilarates the animal.

SUCH are the Advantages of *Solitude*. The *World* is a *troubled Ocean*, and who can erect stable Purposes on its fluctuating Waves. The *World* is a *School of Wrong*, and Who does not feel Himself warping to its pernicious Influences *? On this Sea of Glass †, how insensibly we slide from our Stedfastness! Some *sacred Truth*, which was struck in lively Characters on our Souls, is obscured, if not obliterated. Some
noble

* *Nunquam a turba mores, quos extuli, refero. Aliquid ex eo quod composui turbatur: aliquid ex his quæ fugavi redit. Inimica est multorum conversatio.*
 Seneca.

† Rev. xv. 2.

noble Resolution, which Heaven had wrought in our Breasts, is shaken, if not overthrown. Some *inticing Vanity*, which we had solemnly renounced, again practises its Charms, and again captivates our Affections. How often has an unwary Glance kindled a Fever of irregular Desire in our Hearts? How often has a Word of Applause dropt luscious Poison into our Ears, or some disrespectful Expression raised a Gust of Passion in our Bosoms? Our Innocence is of so *tender a Constitution*, that it suffers in the promiscuous Crowd; our Purity of so *delicate a Complexion*, that it scarce touches on the World without contracting a Stain. We see, we hear with *Peril*.

BUT here *Safety* dwells. Every meddling and intrusive Avocation is secluded. Silence holds the Door against the *Strife of Tongues*, and all the *Impertinencies* of idle *Conversation*. The busy Swarm of *vain Images*, and *cajoling Temptations*, that beset Us, with a buzzing Importunity amidst the Gaieties of Life, are chased by these thickening Shades. Here I may, without Disturbance, commune with my own Heart, and learn that *best of Sciences*, to *know myself*. Here the Soul may rally her dissipated Powers, and Grace recover its native Energy. This is the Opportunity, to rectify the evil Impressions, and expel

10 CONTEMPLATIONS

expel the Contagion, of corrupting Examples. This is the Place, where I may, with Advantage, apply myself to subdue the *Rebel within*, and be Master, not of a *Sceptre*, but of *myself*. —Throng then, ye Ambitious, the *Levees* of the Powerful ; I will be punctual in my *Assignations* with Solitude. To a Mind intent upon its own Improvement, Solitude has Charms incomparably more engaging, than the *Entertainments* presented in the *Theatre*, or the *Honours* conferred in the *Drawing-Room*.

I SAID Solitude. — But am I then *alone* ? — 'Tis true, my Acquaintance are at a Distance. I have stole away from Company, and am remote from all human Observation. — But that is an alarming Thought,

Millions of spiritual Creatures walk the Earth
Unseen, both when we wake, and when we
sleep. M I L T.

P E R H A P S, there may be Numbers of those *invisible Beings* patrolling this same Retreat, and joining with me in contemplating the Creator's Works. Perhaps, those ministring Spirits, who rejoice at the Conversion of a Sinner, and hold up the Goings of the Righteous, may follow Us to the lonely Recess, and, even in our most *solitary*

tary Moments, be our constant Attendants. —

What a pleasing Awe is awakened by such a Reflection ! How venerable it renders my *retired Walk* ! I am struck with Reverence, as under the Roof of some *sacred Edifice*, or in the *Presence-Chamber* of some mighty Monarch. O ! may I never bring any Pride of Imagination, nor indulge the least dissolute Affection, where such refined and exalted Intelligencies exercise their Watch.

'Tis possible, that I am encompassed with such a *Cloud of Witnesses* ; but it is certain, that GOD, the infinite and eternal GOD, is ever with me. The great JEHOVAH, before whom all the Angels bow their Heads, and veil their Faces, surrounds me, supports me, pervades me. “ In HIM I live, move, and have my Being.” The whole World is his *august Temple*, and, in the most *sequestered Corner*, I stand before his adorable Majesty, no less than when I worship in his House, or kneel at his Altar. In every Place, therefore, let me pay Him the Homage of a Heart, cleansed from Idols, and devoted to his Service. In every Circumstance, let me feel no *Ambition*, but to *please* Him ; nor covet any *Happiness*, but to *enjoy* Him.

How sublime is the Description, and how striking the Sentiment, in that noble Passage of the

the Psalms ! *Whither shall I go from thy Spirit, or whither shall I flee from thy Presence ? If I climb up into the Heights of Heaven, Thou art there enthroned in Light. If I go down to the Depths of the Grave, Thou art there also in thy Pavilion of Darknefs. If I retire to the remotest Eastern Climes, where the Morning first takes Wing ; if, swifter than the darting Ray, I pass to the opposite Regions of the West, and remain in the uttermost Parts of the Sea * ; shall I in that distant Situation be beyond thy Reach, or by this sudden Transition escape thy Notice ? So far from it, that could I, with one Glance of Thought, transport myself beyond all the Bounds of Creation, I should still be incircled with the Immensity of thy Essence, or rather, still be inclosed in the Hollow of thy Hand. — Important and delightful Truth ! Let it be interwoven with every Thought, and become one with the very Consciousness of my Existence ; that I may continually walk with GOD, and conduct*

* Psal. cxxxix. 7, 8, 9. There is, I think, an additional Strength and Beauty in the Thought, if, with the learned Mr. Mudge, we suppose an *Antithesis* between the Two Clauses of this last Verse, as there evidently is between those of the preceding ; and that they express, in a poetical stile, the *East* and the *West*.

conduct myself, in every Step of my Behaviour,
“ as seeing *HIM* that is invisible.”

THEY are the happy Persons, Felicity, true Felicity is all their own, who live under an habitual *Sense* of GOD's *Omnipresence*, and a sweet *Persuasion* of his special *Love*. If Dangers threaten, their impregnable Defence is at hand; nothing can be so near to terrify, as their Almighty Guardian to secure them.—To These the Hours can never be tedious, and it is impossible for them to be alone. Do they step aside from the *Occupations* of *animal Life*? A more exalted Set of Employments engage their Attention. They address themselves, in all the various Acts of Devotion, to their heavenly Father, who “ sees in secret, and will reward them “ openly.” They spread all their Wants before his indulgent Eye, and disburden all their Sorrows into his compassionate Bosom.—Do they withdraw from *human Society*? They find themselves under the more immediate Regards of their Maker. They resign the *Satisfactions* of social Intercourse, but it is to cultivate a Correspondence with the condescending Deity, and taste the Pleasures of Divine Friendship.—What is such a *State*, but the very Suburbs of Heaven? What is such a *Conduct*, but an Antepast of eternal Blessedness?

WHAT.

14 CONTEMPLATIONS

WHAT a *profound Silence* has composed the World ! So profound is the Silence, that my very Breath seems a Noise ; the Ticking of my Watch is distinctly heard ; if I do but stir, it creates a Disturbance. There is now none of that confused Din from the tumultuous City : No Voice of jovial Rustics from the neighbouring Meadow : No chirping Melody from the shady Thicket. Every Lip is sealed : Not the least Whisper invades the Air ; nor the least Motion rustles among the Boughs. Echo herself sleeps unmolested. The expanded Ear, though all Attention, catches no Sound, but the liquid Lapse of a murmuring Stream.

All Things are hush'd, as Nature's Self lay dead.

IF, in the midst of this deep and universal Composure, Ten thousand bellowing *Thunders* should burst over my Head, and rend the Skies with their united *Vollies* ; O ! how should I bear so unexpected a *Shock* ? It would stun my Senses, and confound my Thoughts. I should shudder in every Limb, and, perhaps, sink to the Earth with Terror.—Consider then, O Mortals, consider, what a prodigious and amazing Call will, ere long, alarm your sleeping Bones. When the Tenants of the Tombs have slumbered, in
the

the most *undisturbed Repose*, for a Multitude of Ages, what an *inconceivable Consternation* must the *Shout* of the *Archangel*, and the *Trump* of GOD occasion! Will it not wound the Ear of the Ungodly, and affright even to Distraction the impenitent Sinner? The stupendous Peal will found through the Vast of Heaven, will shake the Foundations of Nature, and pierce even the deepest Recesses of the Grave. And how—O! how will the *Prisoners* of Divine *Justice* be able to endure that tremendous *Summons*, to a more tremendous *Tribunal*?—Do Thou, my Soul, listen to the *still Voice* of the *Gospel*. Attend, in this thy Day, to the gracious Invitations of thy Saviour. Then shall that great midnight Cry lose its *Horror*, and be *Music* to thy Ears. It shall be welcome to thy reviving Clay, as the Tidings of Liberty to the Dungeon Captive, as the Year of Jubilee to the harassed Slave. This, this shall be its charming Import, "*Awake, and sing, ye that dwell in Dust* *."

WHAT a general *Cessation* of *Affairs* has this dusky Hour introduced! A little while ago, all was Hurry, Hurry. Life and Activity exerted themselves in a thousand busy Forms. The City swarmed with passing and repassing Multitudes. All the Country was Sweat and Dust. The Air

floated

* Isa. xxvi. 19.

floated in perpetual Agitation, by the flitting Birds, and humming Bees. Art sat prying with his piercing Eyes, and Industry ply'd his restless Hands.—But see, how all this fervent and impetuous Bustle is fled with the setting Sun. The Beasts are slunk to their grassy Couch, and the winged People are retired to their downy Nests: The Hammer has resigned its sounding Task, and the File ceases to repeat its flying Touches: Shut is the well-frequented Shop, and its Threshold no longer worn by the Feet of numerous Customers. The Village-Swain lies drowned in Slumbers; and even his trusty Dog, who, for a considerable Time, stood Centinel at his Door, at length, overcome by watching, snores with his Master.—A Face of Tranquillity and Repose is spread through the Universe. The weary Winds have forgot to blow. The gentle Gales have fanned themselves asleep. Nothing stirs. Not so much as a single Leaf nods. Even the quivering Aspin rests. 'Tis as though the Pulse of Life stood still.

THUS will it be with our *infinitely momentous Concerns*, whence once *the Shadows of the Evening*, that long Evening which follows the Footsteps of Death, *are stretched over Us*. The Dead cannot seek unto God; the Living, the Living alone, are possessed of this inestimable Opportunity.

tunity *. “ There is no Work or Device, no
“ Repentance or Amendment in the Grave, whi-
“ ther We are All hasting †.” When once

* — Nunc, nunc properandus, & acri

Fingendus sine fine rota.

PERS.

Behold! now is the accepted Time. Behold! now
is the Day of Salvation. 2 Cor. vi. 2.

† The State of the Dead is stiled, by King He-
zekiah (Isa. xxxviii. 11.), in that pathetic Lamenta-
tion of his expected Doom נֶרֶץ חֲדָל, and is ren-
dered by *Vitringa*, *Terra Cessationis*, the Land of In-
termiſſion or *Cessation*. Which prevents all Appear-
ance of *Tautology* in the Sentence; and is, I think,
a valuable *Improvement* of the Translation: as it
conveys an Idea, not only distinct from the precede-
ing, but of a very poetical and very afflicting Na-
ture; such as was perfectly proper for the Royal
Singer, and Royal Sufferer, to dwell upon, in his
desponding Moments.—Thus interpreted, the Sense
will run; “ I shall see Man no more; I shall be cut
“ off from the chearful Ways of Men, and all the
“ Sweetness of human Society. And, what is a far-
“ ther Aggravation of the threatned Stroke, I shall,
“ by its taking Place, be numbered with Those, that
“ inhabit the Land of intire *Cessation* and Inactivity:
“ Where there will be no more Possibility of con-
“ tributing to the Happiness of my Kingdom; no
“ more Opportunity of advancing my Creator’s
“ Glory, or of making my own final Salvation
“ sure.—A Sentiment like this is grand and im-
portant; full of Piety, and full of Benevolence; re-
moves all Suspicion of unbecoming *Puſillanimity*, and
does the highest Honour to the Monarch’s Character.

that *closing Scene* is advanced, We shall have no other *Part to act* on this *earthly Theatre*. Then, the *Sluggard*, that has folded his Hands in a criminal Inactivity, must lie down in hopeless Distress, and everlasting Sorrow. Then, that awful Doom will take place, “He that is *holy*,
“ let Him be holy still; and He that is *filthy*,
“ let Him be filthy for ever.”

Is it so my Soul? Is this the *only, only Time* allotted, for obtaining the great Reward, and making thy Salvation sure? And art Thou lulled in a *vain Security*, or dreaming on in a *supine Inadvertency*? Start, O! start from thy Trance. Gird up the Loins of thy Mind, and work while it is Day. Improve the present Seed time, that Eternity may yield a joyful Harvest.—We especially, who are *Watchmen* in *Israel*, and *Ministers* of the glorious *Gospel*, may We be awakened, by this Consideration, to all Assiduity in our holy Office. Some or other of *our People* are ever and anon departing into the invisible State; all *our Friends* are making incessant Approaches to their long Home; and we *ourselves* shall very shortly be transmitted to the Confinement of the Tomb. This therefore is the favourable Juncture, wherein alone we can contribute to their endless Welfare. This is the *Crisis*, the *all-important Crisis* of their final Felicity. Instantly
therefore

therefore let Us *pour in* our wholesome *In-
structions*; now let Us *ply them* with our earnest
Exhortations. A Moment's Delay may be an
irreparable Loss, may be irretrievable Ruin.
While we procrastinate, a fatal Stroke may in-
tervene, and place Us beyond the Power of
administering, or place *them* beyond all Possibility
of receiving, any spiritual Good *.

Now; my Soul, the *Day is ended*. The
Hours are all fled: They are fled to the supreme
Judge, and have given in their *Evidence*. An
Evidence registred in Heaven, and to be pro-
duced at the *great Audit*.—Happy They, whose
Improvement has kept pace with the passing Mi-
nutes. Who have seized them as they advanced,
and engaged them in the Pursuit of Wisdom, or
the Service of Virtue.

How is the Day gone, almost as soon as it
dawned!—The silent *Moments* slip away in-
sensibly. No *Thief* steals more unperceived

* The *Case*, represented by the *Prophet*, (1 Kings
xx. 40.) seems perfectly applicable on this Occasion.
As thy Servant was busy here and there, He was gone.
So, while we are either remiss in our Function, or
laying ourselves out upon *inferior Cares*, the People
of our Charge may be gone; gone beyond the In-
fluence of our *Counsels*, beyond the Reach of our
Prayers; gone into the *unchangeable* and eternal State.

from the *pillaged* House. Where-ever we are, however employed, Time pursues his incessant Course. Though we are listless and dilatory; the great Measurer of our Days presses on, still presses on, in his unwearied Career, and whirls our Weeks, and Months, and Years away.—Is it not then surprisngly strange, to hear People complain of the *Tediousness* of their Time, and how *heavy* it hangs upon their Hands? To see them contriving a Variety of amusing Artifices, to *accelerate* its *Flight*, and *get rid* of its *Burden*. Ah! thoughtless Mortals! Why need you *urge* the *headlong* Torrent? Your Days are *swifter* than a *Post*, which, carrying Dispatches of the last Importance, with unremitted Speed scours the Road. They pass away like the *nimble Ships*, which have the Wind in their Wings, and skim along the watery Plain. They hasten to their destined Period, with the *Rapidity* of an *Eagle*, which leaves the stormy Blast behind Her, while She cleaves the Air, and darts upon her Prey*.

AND

* *Job* ix. 25, 26. By these Three very expressive Images, the inspired Poet represents the *un-intermitted* and *rapid* Flight of Time. The Passage is illustrated with great Judgment, and equal Delicacy, in Dr. Grey's most ingenious Abridgment of *Schultens*.—*Quæ tribus in elementis velocissima, hic admirabili cum emphasi congeruntur. In terris, nil perniciosius*

AND now it is gone, how *short* it appears ! When my fond Eye beheld it in *Perspective*, it seemed a very considerable Space. Minutes crouded upon Minutes, and Hours ranged behind Hours, exhibited an extensive Plan, and flattered me with a long Progression of Pleasures : But, upon a *retrospective View*, how wonderfully is the Scene altered ? The *Landschape*, large and spacious, which a *warm Fancy* drew, brought to the Test of *cool Experience*, shrinks into a Span. Just as the Shores vanish, and Mountains dwindle to a Spot, when the Sailor, surrounded by Skies and Ocean, throws his last Look on his native Land. How clearly do I now discover the Cheat ? May it never impose upon my unwary Imagination again ! I find, there is nothing abiding on this Side Eternity. A *long Duration*, in a State of *finite Existence*, is mere *Illusion*.—Perhaps, the *Healthy* and the *Gay* may not readily credit the serious Truth ; especially from a young Pen, and new to its Employ. Let us then refer ourselves to the Decision of the *Ancient*. Ask some venerable old Person, that is just marching off the mortal Stage, *How pernicius cursore, & quidem læti quid ferente. Rapidus tamen adhuc undas, non secant, sed supervolant, navigiola papyro contexta. Omnium rapidissime aerem grandibus alis permotitur aquila, præcipiti lapsu ruens in prædam.*

many have been the Days of the Years of thy Life *? It was a Monarch's Question, and therefore can want no Recommendation to the fashionable World.—Observe, how He shakes his hoary Locks, and from a deep-felt Conviction replies;
 “ *Fourscore Years* have finished their Rounds,
 “ to furrow these Cheeks, and cloathe this Head
 “ in Snow. Such a Term may seem long and
 “ large to inconsiderate Youth. But O! how
 “ short, how scanty, to one that has made the
 “ Experiment! *Short*, as a *Gleam* of transient
 “ Sunshine; *scanty*, ‘as the Shadow that de-
 “ parteth.’ Methinks, it was but Yesterday,
 “ that I exchanged my childish Sports, for
 “ manly Exercises; and now I am resigning
 “ them both, for the Sleep of Death. As soon
 “ as we are *born*, we begin to draw to our
 “ *End*; and how small is the Interval, between
 “ the Cradle and the Tomb?”—O! may we believe this Testimony of mature Age! May every Evening bring it, with clearer Evidence, to our Minds; and may we form such an Estimate of the *little Pittance*, while it is upon the *advancing* Hand, as we shall certainly make, when the Sands are all *run down*.

LET me add one Reflection on the *Work* to be *done*, while this Shuttle is flying through the Loom.

* Gen. xlvii. 8.

Loom. A Work of no small Difficulty, and yet of the utmost Consequence.—Hast Thou not seen, hast Thou not heard of, the *Excellent* of the *Earth*, who were living Images of their Maker? His *Divine Likeness* was transfused into their Hearts, and beamed forth in all their Conduct. Beamed forth in the *Meekness* of *Wisdom*, and *Purity* of *Affection*; in all the *tender Offices* of Love, and all the *noble Efforts* of Zeal. To be stampt with the same beautiful Signature, and to be Followers of Them, as They were of CHRIST; *this, this* is thy *Business*. On the Accomplishment of this, thy *eternal All* depends. And, will an Affair of such unspeakable Weight admit of a Moment's Delay, or consist with the least Remissness?—Especially, since much of thy appointed Time is already elapsed, and the *Remainder* is all *Uncertainty*, save only that it is in the very Act to fly.—Or suppose, Thou hadst made a *Covenant* with the Grave, and wast assured of reaching the Age of *Methuselah*; how soon would even *such* a *Lease* expire!—Extend it, if you please, still farther, and let it be *co-existent* with *Nature* itself: Yet how speedily will the *Consummation* of *all Things* commence! For, yet a very little while, and the commissioned Archangel lifts up his Hand to Heaven, and swears by the Almighty Name, *That*

Time shall be no longer *. Then, *abused Opportunities* will never return; and *new Opportunities*

* This alludes to the Beginning of *Revelations* the xth; which, abstracted from its spiritual Meaning, and considered only as a stately *Piece of Machinery*, well deserves our Attention; and, I will venture to say, has not its *superior*, perhaps not its *equal*, in any of the most celebrated Masters of *Greece* and *Rome*.—All that is gloomy or beautiful in the Atmosphere, all that is striking or magnificent in every Element, is taken in to heighten the Idea. Yet nothing is disproportionate, but an uniform Air of ineffable Majesty greatens, exalts, ennobles the Whole.—Be pleased to observe the *Aspect* of this august Personage. All the Brightness of the Sun shines in his Countenance, and all the Rage of the Fire burns in his Feet.—See his *Apparel*. The Clouds compose his Robe, and the Drapery of the Sky floats upon his Shoulders. The Rainbow forms his Diadem, and that which “compasseth the Heaven with a glorious Circle,” is the Ornament of his Head.—Behold his *Attitude*. One Foot stands on the Ocean, and the other rests on the Land. The wide-extended Earth, and the World of Waters, serve as Pedestals for those mighty Columns.—Consider the *Action*. His Hand is lifted up to the Height of the Stars. He speaks; and the Regions of the Firmament echo with the mighty Accents, as the midnight Desert resounds with the Lion’s Roar. The Artillery of the Skies is discharged at the Signal, a Peal of sevenfold Thunder spreads the Alarm, and prepares the World to receive his Orders.—To finish all, and give the highest Grandeur,

ties will never more be offered. Then, should negligent Mortals wish ever so passionately for a few Hours, a few *Moments* only, to be thrown back from the opening Eternity, *Thousands of Worlds* would not be able to procure the Grant.

SHALL I now be industrious to *shorten*, what is no longer than a *Span*; or to *quicken* the Pace of what is ever on the *Wing*? Shall I squander away what is *unutterably important*, while it lasts; and, when once departed, is *altogether irrevocable*? O! my Soul, forbear the Folly, forbear the desperate Extravagance. Wilt Thou chide as a *Loiterer*, the Arrow that *boundeth*

Grandeur, as well as the utmost Solemnity, to the Representation, hear the *Decree* that issues from his Mouth. He *swears by HIM that liveth for ever and ever*. In whatever Manner so majestic a Person had expressed Himself, He could not fail of commanding universal Attention. But, when He confirms his Speech by a most sacred and inviolable Oath, we are not only wrapt in silent Suspense, but overwhelmed with the profoundest Awe. — He swears, *That Time shall be no longer*. Was ever Voice so full of Terror, so big with Wonder? It proclaims, not the Fall of Empires, but the final Period of Things. It strikes off the Wheels of Nature; bids Ages and Generations cease to roll; and, with one potent Word, consigns a whole World over to Dissolution. — This is *one* among a *Multitude* of very sublime and *masterly Strokes*, to be found in that too-much neglected Book — the *Bible*.

from

from the String, or sweep away *Diamonds* as the *Refuse* of thy House? — Throw Time away! Astonishing, ruinous, irreparable Profuseness! Throw Empires away, and be blameless. But O! be parsimonious of thy Days; husband thy precious Hours. They go connected, indissolubly connected, with Heaven or Hell *. *Improved*, they are a sure Pledge of everlasting Glory; *wasted*, they are a sad Preface to never-ending Confusion and Anguish.

THE *Darkness* is now at its Height; and I cannot but admire the obliging Manner of its taking Place. It comes not with a blunt and abrupt *Incivility*, but makes gentle and *respectful Advances*. A precipitate Transition from the Splendors of Day, to all the Horrors of Midnight, would be both inconvenient and frightful. It would bewilder the Traveller in his Journey; it would strike the Creation with Amazement; and, perhaps, be pernicious to the Organs of Sight. Therefore the Gloom rushes not upon

* I have somewhere seen, upon a Sun-dial, the following Inscription; which, I think, is the most proper *Motto* for the Instrument which measures our Time; and the most striking *Admonition*, that can possibly be given to the various Crouds of Beholders.
— *Ab hec momento pendet Æternitas.*

us instantaneously, but increases by slow Degrees; and, sending *Twilight* before as its *Harbinger*, decently advertises us of its Approach. By this Means, we are prepared for the Change, and are able to take all suitable and timely Measures for its Reception.——Thus graciously has Providence regulated, not only the *grand Vicissitudes* of the Seasons, but also the *common Interchanges* of Light and Darkness, with an apparent Reference to *our Comfort*.

Now the fierce *Inhabitants* of the *Forest* forsake their Dens. A thousand grim Forms, a thousand growling Monsters, pace the Desert. Death is in their Jaws, while, stung with Hunger, and athirst for Blood, they roam their nightly Rounds.——O! *unfortunate Traveller*, overtaken by the Night in those dismal Wilds! How must He stand aghast at the mingled Yell of ravenous Throats, and Lions roaring after their Prey! Defend Him, propitious Heaven! or else He must see his endearing Spouse, and hail his native Home, no more!——Now the prowling Wolf, like a murderous Russian, dogs the Shepherd's Footsteps, and besets his bleating Charge. The Fox, like a crafty Felon, steals to the thatched Cottage, and carries off the feathered Booty.

HAPPY

HAPPY for the World, were these the only Destroyers that walk in Darknefs. But, alas ! there are *Savages* in *human Shape*, who, muffled in Shades, infest the Abodes of civilized Life. The *Sons of Violence* make Choice of this Season *, to perpetrate the most outrageous Acts of Wrong and Robbery. The *Adulterer* waiteth for the Twilight, and, baser than the Villain on the Highway, betrays the Honour of his Bosom-friend. Now *Faction* forms her close Cabals, and whispers her traiterous Insinuations, Now *Rebellion* plans her accursed Plots, and prepares the Train to blow a Nation into Ruin. Now Crimes, that hide their odious Heads in the Day, haunt the Seats of Society, and stalk through the Gloom with audacious Front. Now the *Vermin* of the *Stews* crawl from their lurking Holes, to wallow in Sin, and feed on the Venom of the Night. Each soothing Himself with the *fond Notion*, That all is safe ; That *no Eye sees*.

AND are They then concealed ? Preposterous Madmen ! To draw the Curtain between their infamous Practices, and a *little Set* of Mortals ;

* ——— When Night

Darkens the Streets, then wander forth the Sons
Of *Belial*, flown with Insolence and Wine.

M I L T.

but

but lay them open to all these chaste and *wakeful Eyes* of Heaven *. — Are they then concealed ? No, truly : Were these vigilant Luminaries closed ; an Eye *keener* than the Lightning's Flash, *brighter* than Ten thousand Suns, beholds their every Motion. Their *thickest Shades* are *beaming Day* †, to the jealous Inspector, and supreme Judge of human Actions.—Deluded Creatures ! have ye not heard, have ye not read, “ That “ Clouds and Darkneſs are round about Him || ? ” In that very Gloom, to which you fly for Covert, He erects his Throne. What you reckon your *Screen*, is the *Bar* of his *Tribunal*. O ! remember this : ſtand in Awe, and ſin not. Remember, that the great and terrible GOD is *about your Path* ‡, when you take your mid-
night

* — *Sed luna videt, ſed ſydera teſtes
Intendunt oculos.*

† This is finely and very forcibly expreſſed by the Pſalmiſt : *If I ſay, Peradventure the Darkneſs ſhall cover me, then ſhall my Night be turned to Day :* Or, as it may be rendered ſomewhat more emphatically, *Even the Night ſhall be broad Day-light all around me.* Pſal. cxxxix. 10.

|| Pſal. xcvi. 2.

‡ The original Words are much ſtronger than the Tranſlation. זרירי and הסכנתה ſignify, *Thou ſiſteſt my Path*, and art *familiarly* or *intimately acquainted with* all my Ways. The former, I apprehend,

30 CONTEMPLATIONS

night Range; is *about your Bed*, when you indulge the loose Desire; and *spies out all your Ways*, be they ever so secretly conducted, or artfully disguised.

SOME Minutes ago, a *Passenger* crossed along the Road. His Horse's Foot struck the Ground, and fetched *Fire* from a *Flint*. My Eye, tho' at a Distance, caught the View; and saw, with *great Clearness*, the bright Sparkles: Of which, had I been ever so near, I should not have discerned the *least Glimpse*, under the Blaze of Day *.—So, when *Sickness* has drawn a *Veil* over

hend, denoting the *exact Cognizance* which the Almighty taketh, the latter implying the *constant Inspection* which He exerciseth over all the Circumstances of our Conduct. *Psal. cxxxix. 2.*

* I beg Leave to inform the *young Gentleman*, whose Name dignifies my Dedication, That this was a Remark of his honoured *Father*, when we rode together, and conversed in a dusky Evening. I mention this Circumstance, partly to secure the Paragraph from Contempt, partly to give Him and the World an Idea of that eminently serious Taste, which distinguished my deceased Friend.—The *less obvious* the *Reflection*, the more clearly it discovers a Turn of Mind remarkably spiritual, which would suffer nothing to escape, without yielding some religious Improvement: And the *meaner* the *Incident*, the more admirable was that Fertility of Imagination,

over the Gaiety of our Hearts; when *Misfortunes* have eclipsed the Splendor of our outward Circumstances; how many *important Convictions* present themselves with the brightest Evidence? Under the Sunshine of Prosperity they lay undiscovered; but, when some intervening Cloud has darkened the Scene, they emerge out of their Obscurity, and even glitter upon our Minds. Then, the *World*, that delusive Cheat, confesses her Emptiness; but JESUS, the bright and Morning-Star, beams forth with inimitable Lustre. Then, *Vice* loses all her fallacious Allurements; that painted Strumpet is horrible as the Hags of Hell; but *Virtue*, despised *Virtue*, gains Loveliness from a frowning Providence, and treads the Shades with more than mortal Charms.—May this reconcile me, and all the Sons of Sorrow, to our appointed Share of Suffering. If Tribulation tend to dissipate the inward Darkness, and pour heavenly Day upon our Minds, welcome Distress, welcome Disappointment, welcome whatever our froward Flesh, or peevish Passions, would miscall Calamities. *These light Afflictions, which are but for a Moment, shall sit easy upon our Spirits; since they besfriend our Knowledge, promote our Faith, and so*

tion, which could deduce the noblest Truths from the most trivial Occurrences.

“work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory *.”

How has this *Darkness* snatched every splendid and graceful Object from my Sight? It has dashed the Sponge over the Pictures of Spring, and destroyed all the delicate *Distinctions* of Things. Where are now the fine Tinges, that so lately charmed me from the glowing Parterre? The Blush is struck out from the Cheeks of the Rose, and the snowy Hue is dropt from the Lily. I cast my Eyes towards a magnificent Seat; but the aspiring Columns, and fair-ex-

* 2 Cor. iv. 17. The great *Stephens*, that Oracle of Grecian Learning, translates our Apostle's Phrase — καὶ ὑπερβολὴν, *Quo nihil magis dici aut fingi potest*. But how does the Sense rise? How is the Idea enlarged, under *Two* such forcible Expressions? — The whole Verse is a Masterpiece of the beautiful *Antithesis*, the lively *Description*, and the nervous *Diction*. It is one of those noble Passages in the inspired Writings, which, like some rich aromatic Plants, cannot be transferred from their own generous and native Soil, without being impaired in their Vivacity, and losing much of their Delicacy. Perhaps, the following Version may be somewhat less injurious to the sacred Original, than the common Translation; — *Our very light Affliction, which is but just for the present Moment, worketh out a far more exceeding, an incomparably great, and eternal Weight of Glory.*

panded

panded Front, are mingled in rude Confusion. Without the Sun, all the *Elegance* of the blooming World is a mere *Blank*, all the *Symmetry* of Architecture a *shapeless Heap*.

Is not this an expressive Emblem of the *Love-
liness*, which the *Sun* of *Righteousness* transfuses
into all that is amiable? Was it not for JESUS
and his *Merits*, I should sigh with Anguish of
Spirit, even while I rove through Ranks of the
most beautiful Flowers, or breathe amidst a Wil-
derness of Sweets. Was it not for JESUS and
his Merits, I should roam, like some *disconsolate
Spectre*, even through the Smiles of Creation,
and the Caresses of Fortune. My Conversation
in this World, though dressed in the most en-
gaging Forms of external Pleasure, would be like
the Passage of a *condemned Malefactor* through
enamelled Meadows, and Bowers of Bliss, to be
broke upon the Wheel, or tortured to Death
on the Rack. But a *daily Reflection* on the
LAMB's atoning Blood; a *comfortable Trust*
that my Soul is reconciled through this glorious
Expiation; this is the Ray, the golden Ray,
that irradiates the Face of the Universe. This
is the *Oil of Beauty*, which makes all Things
wear a cheerful Aspect; and the *Oil of Gladness*,
which disposes the Spectator to behold them with
D Delight.

Delight *. This, this, is the secret Charm, that teaches Nature, in all her Operations, so exquisitely to please.

“MAN goeth forth to his Work, and to his “Labour, till the Evening.” But then his Strength fails; his Spirits flag; and he stands in need, not only of some *Respite* from *Toil*, but of some kindly and soveraign *Refreshments*.—— What an admirable Provision for this Purpose, is *Sleep*? Sleep introduces a most welcome Vacation, both for the Soul and Body. The Exercises of the Brain, and the Labours of the Hands,

* Thus applied, that fine Piece of *Flattery*, addressed to the *Heathen* Emperor, is strictly and literally true.

—— *Vultus ubi tuus*
Affulsit populo, gratior it dies,
Et soles melius nitent.

HORAT.

Which I would cast in a *Christian* Mould, and thus translate :

When Faith presents the Saviour's Death,
And whispers, “This is thine;”
Sweetly my rising Hours advance,
And peacefully decline.

While such my Views, the radiant Sun
Sheds a more sprightly Ray;
Each Object smiles; all Nature charms;
I sing my Cares away.

are

are at once discontinued. So that the *weary Limbs* repair their exhausted Vigour, while the *pensive Thoughts* drop their Load of Sorrows, and the *busy* ones rest from the Fatigue of intense Application.—Most reviving Cordial! Equally beneficial to our animal and intellectual Powers. It supple the *fleshy Machine*, and keeps all its nice Movements in a proper Posture for easy Play. It animates the *thinking Faculties* with fresh Alacrity, and rekindles their Ardor for the Studies of the Dawn. Without these enlivening Recruits, how soon would the most *robust Constitution* be wasted into a *walking Skeleton*, and the most *learned Sage* degenerate into a *hoary Idiot*? Some time ago, I beheld, with Surprise, poor *Florio*. His Air was wild, his Countenance meagre, his Speech roving and disconcerted. Inquiring the Cause of this strange Alteration, I was informed, That, for several Nights, he had not closed his Eyes in Sleep. For Want of which *noble Restorative*, that sprightly Youth, who was once the Life of the Discourse, and the Darling of the Company, is become a Spectacle of Misery and Horror.

How many of my Fellow-Creatures are, at this very Instant, confined to the *Bed of Languishing*, and complaining, with that illustrious Sufferer of old, *Wearisome Nights are appointed*

to me? Instead of indulging soft Repose, they are counting the tedious Hours; telling every striking Clock; or measuring the very Moments by their throbbing Pulse. How many, *harassed* with *Pain*, most passionately long to obtain some little Truce from their Agonies, in peaceful Slumbers? How many, *sick* with *Disquietude*, and restless even on their downy Pillows, would purchase this transient Oblivion of their Woes, almost at any Rate?—That, which *Wealth* cannot procure, which *Multitudes* sigh for in vain, thy GOD has bestowed on Thee, times out of Number. The *welcome Visitant*, punctual at the needed Hour, has entered thy Chamber, and poured his Poppies round thy Couch. Has gently closed thy Eye-lids, and shed his slumberous Dews over all thy Senses.

SINCE Sleep is so absolutely necessary, so inestimably valuable, observe, what a *fine Apparatus* Almighty Goodness has made, to accommodate us with the *balmy Blessing*. With how kind a Precaution He removes whatever might obstruct its Access, or impede its Influence. He draws around us the *Curtain of Darknefs*, which inclines us to a drowsy Indolence, and conceals every Object that might too strongly agitate the Sense. He conveys *Peace* into our *Apartments*, and imposes Silence on the whole Creation.

Every

Every Animal is bidden to tread softly, or rather to cease from its Motions, when Man is retiring to his Repose.—May we not discern, in this gracious Disposition of Things, the *tender Cares* of a *Nursing-Mother*; who hushes every Noise, and secludes every Disturbance, when She has laid the Child of her Love to Rest? So, by such soothing Circumstances, and gently-working Opiates, *HE giveth to his Beloved Sleep* *.

ANOTHER signal Instance of a Providence intent upon our Welfare, is, That we are preserved *safe* in the Hours of *Slumber*. How are we then lost to all Apprehension of Danger, even though the Murderer be at our Bed-side, or his naked Sword at our Breast. Destitute of all Concern for ourselves, we are unable to *think of*, much more to *provide for*, our own Security. At these Moments, therefore, we lie open to innumerable Perils, and especially to the Incursions of our spiritual Enemy, without either Vigilance to observe the Foe, or Strength to resist the Assault. What dreadful Mischief might the *Adversary of Mankind* work, were there not an invisible Hand to controul his Rage, and protect poor Mortals? What Scenes of Horror might he represent to our Imaginations, and “ scare

* Psal. cxxvii. 2,

“ us with Dreams, or terrify us with Visions * ? ” But the *Keeper of Israel*, who never slumbers, nor sleeps, interposes in our Behalf; at once to *cherish* us under his *Wings*, and to *defend* us as with a *Shield*. It is said of *Solomon*, “ That Threescore valiant Men were about his Bed, all expert in War, every one with his Sword upon his Thigh, because of Fear in the Night † . ” But One greater than *Solomon*, One mightier than Myriads of armed Hosts, even the great *JEHOVAH*, in whom is everlasting Strength, *HE* vouchsafes to watch over our sleeping Minutes, and to stop all the Avenues of Ill.—O! the unwearied and condescending *Goodness* of our Creator! Who *lulls* us to our *Rest*, by bringing on the silent Shades, and *plants* his own ever-watchful Eye as our *Centinel*, while we enjoy the needful Repose.

REASON now resigns her sedate Office, and *Fancy*, extravagant *Fancy*, leads the Mind

* What a complete Master that malignant Spirit is, in exhibiting *visionary Representations*, appears from his Conduct towards *CHRIST* on the high Mountain; and that he is too ready, if not restrained by an over-ruling Power, to employ his Dexterity in *afflicting Mankind*, is evident from his Treatment of *Job*. See *Luke* iv. 5. *Job* vii. 14.

† *Cant.* iii. 7, 8.

through

through a *Maze of Vanity*. The Head is crouded with false Images, and tantalized with the most ridiculous Misapprehensions of Things. Some are expatiating amidst *Fairy Fields*, and gathering Garlands of visionary Bliss; while their Bodies are stretched on a Wisp of Straw, and sheltered by the Cobwebs of a Barn. Others, quite insensible of their Rooms of State, are mourning in a *doleful Dungeon*, or struggling with the raging Billows. Perhaps, with hasty Steps, they climb the craggy Cliff; and, with *real* Anxiety, fly from the *imaginary* Danger. Or else, benumbed with sudden Fear, and finding themselves unable to escape, they give up at once their Hopes, and their Efforts; and, though reclined on a Couch of Ivory, are sinking, all helpless and distressed, in the furious Whirlpool. So unaccountable are the *Vagaries* of the *Brain*, while Sleep maintains its Dominion over the Limbs!

BUT is This the only Season, when absurd and incoherent Irregularities play their Magic on our Minds? Are there not Those who *dream* even in their *waking* Moments?—Some pride Themselves in a Notion of *superior Excellence*, because the Royal Favour has annexed a few *splendid Titles* to their Names; or because the dying Silkworm has bequeathed her *finest Threads*, to

cover their Nakedness.—Others congratulate their own *signal Happiness*, because Loads of *golden Lumber* are amassed together in their Coffers; or promise themselves a most superlative Felicity indeed, when some thousands more are added to the useless Heap.—Nor are there wanting others, who gape after *substantial* Satisfaction from *airy* Applause; and flatter themselves with, I know not what, Immortality in the momentary Buz of Renown. Are any of These a whit more reasonable in their *Opinions*, than the poor ragged Wretch in his *Reveries*, who, while snoring under a *Hedge*, exults in the Possession of his *stately Palace*, and sumptuous Furniture? — If Persons, who are *very Vassals* to their own *domineering* Passions, and *led captive* by numberless Temptations; if these Persons pique themselves with a Conceit of their *Liberty*, and fancy themselves the *generous* and *gallant* Spirits of the Age; where is the Difference between Theirs and the Madman's Frenzy, who, though *chained* to the Floor, is *throned* in Thought, and wielding an imaginary Sceptre?—In a Word; as many as borrow their Dignity from a Cap of Feathers; or send their Souls to seek for Bliss in the Blandishments of Sense, or in any thing short of the incorruptible Inheritance; what are they but Dreamers with

with their Eyes open ; *delirious*, though in *Health* ?

WOULD you see their *Picture* drawn to the very *Life*, and the Success of their *Schemes* calculated with the utmost *Exactness*, cast your Eye upon that fine Representation exhibited by the Prophet : *It shall be even as when a hungry Man dreameth, and behold, he eateth ; but he awaketh, and his Soul is empty : Or as when a thirsty Man dreameth, and behold, he drinketh ; but he awaketh, and behold, he is faint, and his Soul hath Appetite* *. Such is the *Race*, and such the *Prize*, of all those *Candidates* for *Honour* and *Joy*, who run wide of the Mark of the high Calling of GOD in CHRIST JESUS. They live in *Vanity*, and die in *Woe*. — Awaken us, merciful LORD, from these *noon-tide Trances* ! Awaken us, while *Conviction* may turn to our Advantage, and not serve only to increase our Torment. O ! let our “ Eyes be enlightened, “ to discern the Things that are excellent ; ” and no longer be imposed upon by fantastic Appearances, which, however *pompous* they may seem, will prove more *empty* than the *Visions* of the Night, more *transient* than the Dream that is forgotten.

* Isa. xxix. 8.

THIS is the Time, in which *Ghosts* are supposed to make their Appearance. Now, the *timorous Imagination* teems with Phantoms, and creates numberless Terrors to itself. Now dreary Forms, in *sullen State*, stalk along the Gloom; or, *swifter* than *Lightening*, glide across the Shades. Now, Voices more than mortal * are heard from the echoing Vaults, and Groans issue from the hollow Tombs. Now, melancholy Spectres visit the Ruins of ancient Monasteries, and frequent the solitary Dwellings of the Dead. They pass and repass, in unsubstantial Images, along the forsaken Galleries; or take their determined Stand over some lamented Grave. How often has the *School-Boy* fetched a long Circuit, and trudged many a needless Step, in order to avoid the haunted *Church-yard*? Or, if Necessity, sad Necessity, has obliged him to cross the Spot, where *human Skulls* are lodged below, and the *baleful Yews* shed supernumerary Horrors above; a thousand hideous Stories rush into his Memory; Fear adds Wings to his Feet; he scarce touches the Ground; dares not once look

* *Vox quoque per lucos vulgo exaudita silentes
Ingens, & simulacra modis pallentia miris
Visa sub obscurum noctis.*

VIRG.

behind him ; and blesses his good Fortune, if no frightful Sound purred at his Heels, if no ghastly Shape bolted upon his Sight *.

'Tis strange, to observe the excessive Timidity that possesses many Peoples Minds, on this *fanciful Occasion* ; while they are void of all Concern on others of the most *tremendous Importance*. Those, who are startled, in any dark and lonely Walk, at the *very Apprehension* of a single Spectre, are nevertheless unimpressed at the *sure Prospect* of entering into a whole World of disembodied Beings. Nay, are without any Emotions of Awe, though they know themselves to be hastening into the Presence of the great, infinite, and eternal Spirit.—Should some *pale Messenger*, from the Regions of the Dead, draw back our Curtains, at the Hour of Midnight, and, appointing some particular Place, say, as the horrid Apparition to *Brutus*, *I'll meet Thee there* † : I believe, the boldest Heart would feel

* See that valuable Poem filed *The Grave*, Line 56.

† The Story of *Brutus*, and his *evil Genius*, is well known. Nor must it be denied, that the precise Words of the Spectre to the Hero were, *I'll meet Thee at Philippi*. But as this would not answer my Purpose, I was obliged to make an Alteration in the Circumstance of *Place*.

44 CONTEMPLATIONS

something like a Panic ; would seriously think upon the Adventure, and be in Pain for the Event. But when a *Voice* from *Heaven* cries, in the awakening Language of the Prophet, *Prepare to meet thy GOD, O Israel* * ; how little is the Warning regarded ? How soon is it forgot ? Preposterous Stupidity ! To be *utterly unconcerned*, where it is the truest Wisdom to take the Alarm ; and to be *all Trepidation*, where there is nothing really terrible.—Do Thou, my Soul, remember thy Saviour's Admonition ; “ I will
 “ forewarn you, whom you shall fear. Fear
 “ not these *imaginary Horrors* of the Night ;
 “ but fear that *awful Being*, whose Revelation
 “ of Himself, though with Expressions of *pecu-*
 “ *liar Mercy*, made *Moses*, his favourite Servant,
 “ tremble exceedingly : Whose Manifestation,
 “ with Purposes of *inexorable Vengeance*, will
 “ make *mighty Conquerors*, that were familiar
 “ with Dangers, and estranged to Dismay, call
 “ upon the Mountains to fall on them, and the
 “ Rocks to cover them : The *majestic Menace*
 “ of whose Eye, when He comes attended with
 “ thousand thousands of his immortal Hosts, will
 “ make the *very Heavens* cleave asunder, and
 “ the *World* flee away. — O ! dread his *Dis-*

* Amos iv. 12.

“ *pleasure* ;

“ *pleasure* ; secure his *Favour* ; and then Thou
 “ may’st commit all thy other *Anxieties* to the
 “ Wind ; Thou may’st laugh at every other
 “ Fear.”

THIS brings to my Mind a *memorable* and amazing *Occurrence*, recorded in the Book of *Job* : Which, I think, is a most incontestable Proof of the *real Existence* of Apparitions, on some very extraordinary *Emergencies* ; while it discountenances those *Legions of idle Tales*, which Superstition has raised, and Credulity received. Since it teaches us, that if, at any Time, those Visitants from the unknown World render themselves perceivable by Mortals, it is not upon any Errand of frivolous Consequence ; but to convey *Intelligences* of the utmost Moment, or to work *Impressions* of the highest Advantage.

’T WAS in the *Dead of Night*. All Nature lay involved in Darknefs. Every Creature was buried in Sleep. The most profound Silence reigned through the Universe. In these solemn Moments, *Eliphaz* alone, all wakeful and solitary, was musing upon sublime and heavenly Subjects — When, lo ! an awful Being, from the invisible Realms, burst into his Apartment *. *A Spirit passed before his Face. Astonishment* seized

* *Job* iv. 13, 14, &c. I have given this *sine Picture*
 a modern

seized the Beholder. His Bones shivered within Him; his Flesh trembled all over Him; and the Hair of his Head stood erect with Horror.—

Sudden and unexpected was the *Appearance* of the Phantom; but not such its *Departure*. It stood still, to present itself more fully to his View.

It made a solemn Pause, to prepare his Mind for some momentous Message.—After which, a

Voice was heard. A *Voice*, for the *Importance* of its *Meaning*, worthy to be had in everlasting Remembrance; for the *Solemnity* of its *Delivery*, enough to alarm a Heart of Stone. It spoke; and this was the Purport of its Words;—“*Shall*

“*Man, frail and wretched Man, be Just before*

“*the mighty GOD? Shall even the most up-*

“*right and accomplished of Mortals be Pure in the*

a *modern Dress*, rather for the Sake of Variety and Illustration, than from any Apprehension of improving the admirable Original. Such an Attempt, I am sensible, would be more absurd, than to lacquer Gold, or paint the Diamond. The Description in *Eliphaz's* own Language is awful and affecting to the last Degree. A *Night-Piece*, dressed in all the Circumstances of the deepest Horror. I question, whether *Shakespeare* himself, though so peculiarly happy for his great Command of terrifying Images, has any Thing superior or comparable to this. The Judges of fine Composition see the masterly Strokes; and, I believe, the most ordinary Reader feels them, chilling his Blood, and awakening Emotions of Dread in his Mind.

“*Sight*

“ *Sight of his Maker* * ? Behold, and consider
 “ it attentively. *He put no such Trust in his*
 “ most exalted *Servants*, as should bespeak them
 “ altogether incapable of Defect, or authorize
 “ them to arrogate any Honour to themselves.
 “ *And his very Angels*, without the least Injury
 “ to their Character, *He charged with Folly* ;
 “ as sinking, even in the highest Perfection of
 “ their Holiness, infinitely beneath his transcen-
 “ dent Glories ; and falling, even in all the
 “ Fidelity of their Obedience, inexpressibly
 “ short of the Homage due to his most adorable
 “ Majesty. And if angelic Natures must not
 “ presume to justify either Themselves, or their
 “ Services, before immaculate and uncreated
 “ Purity ; *how much less* does such a Carriage
 “ become *Them, that dwell in Houses of Clay* ;

* There seems to be a significant and beautiful
Gradation in the Hebrew Words מְנוּשׁ and נָבַר ,
 which I have endeavoured to preserve by a Sort of
paraphrastic Version. — The Reader will observe a
new Turn given to the Sentiment, and much *nobler*
 than that which our *English Translation* exhibits.
 The Passage, thus rendered, speaks a Truth incom-
 parably more weighty, and needful to be inculcated.
 A Truth, exactly parallel to that humbling Confes-
 sion of the Prophet, *We are all as an unclean Thing* ;
 and to that solemn Declaration of the Psalmist, *In*
thy Sight shall no Man living be justified. Vide
 Schult. in loc.

“ whose

“ whose Original is from the Dust, and whose
 “ State is all Imperfection? ”

I WOULD observe from hence, the very singular Necessity of that *Poverty of Spirit*, which intirely *renounces* its own Attainments, and consequently *submits* to the *Righteousness* of the incarnate GOD. To inculcate this Lesson, the *Son of the Blessed* came down from Heaven, and pressed no other Principle with so repeated an Importunity on his Hearers. To insfil the same Doctrine, the HOLY GHOST touched the *Lips* of the *Apostles* with sacred Eloquence, and made it an eminent Part of their Commission “ to
 “ bring down every high Imagination.” That no Expedient might be wanting, to give it a deep and lasting Efficacy on the human Mind, a Phantom arises from the *Valley* of the Shadow of *Death*, or a Teacher descends from the *Habitation* of *Spirits*.—Whatever then we neglect, let us not neglect to cultivate *this Grace*, which has been so variously taught, so powerfully enforced.

HARK ! a *doleful Voice*.—With sudden Starts, and hideous Screams, it disturbs the Silence of the peaceful Night. 'Tis the *Screech-Owl*, sometimes in frantic, sometimes in disconsolate Accents, uttering

uttering her Woes *.—She flies the vocal Grove,
and shuns the Society of all the feathered Choir.
The blooming Gardens, and flowery Meads,
have no Charms for Her. Obscene Shades,
ragged Ruins, and Walls overgrown with Ivy,
are her favourite Haunts. *Above*, the mouldering
Precipice nods, and threatens a Fall; *be-*
low, the Toad crawls, or the poisonous Adder
hisses. The sprightly Morning, which awakens
other Animals into Joy, administers no Pleasure
to this *gloomy Recluse*. Even the smiling Face of
Day, is her Aversion; and all its lovely Scenes
create nothing but Uneasiness.

So, just so, would it fare with the *Ungodly*,
were it possible to suppose their Admission into
the chaste and bright *Abodes* of endless *Felicity*.
They would find nothing but Disappointment
and Shame, even at the Fountain-Head of Hap-
piness and Honour. For how could the *Tongue*,
habituated to *Profaneness*, taste any Delight in
joining the harmonious Adorations of Heaven?

• *Solaque culminibus ferali carmine bubo*
Sæpe queri, longasque in fletum ducere voces.

Thus sung that charming Genius, that Prince of the
antient Poets, that most consummate Master of Ele-
gance and Accuracy; all whose *Sentiments* are Na-
ture, whose every *Description* is a Picture, whose
whole *Language* is Music — *Virgil*.

E

How

How could the *Lips*, cankered with *Slander*, relish the Raptures of everlasting Praise? Where would be the Satisfaction of the *vain Beauty*, or the *supercilious Grandee*? Since, in the Temple of the Skies, no Incense of Flattery would be addressed to the one, nor any obsequious Homage paid to the other. The transcendent and immaculate Purity of the blessed GOD would *flash Confusion* on the lascivious Eye. And the envious Mind must be on a *Rack* of self-tormenting *Passions*, to observe Millions of happy Beings, shining in all the Perfection of Glory, and solacing themselves in the Fulness of Joy. In short, the unsanctified Soul, even amidst the Mansions of immortal Blessedness, would be like this melancholy Bird, *dislodged* from her darksome Retirement, and *imprisoned* under the Beams of Day *.

THE

* I cannot forbear taking Notice, with what admirable *Emphasis* and *Propriety* our LORD touches this important Point, in his memorable Conference with *Nicodemus*. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a Man be born again, He cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*; q. d. "I wave the *Authority* of the supreme Judge, and speak with the instructive *Condescension* of a Master in *Israel*. "Though I might, without being liable to the least "Controul, pass it into a sovereign Decree, That "unrenewed Mortals, who are Slaves to corrupt "Appetite,

THE Voice of this Creature screaming at our Windows, or of the Raven croaking over our Roof, is, they say, a *Token* of approaching *Death*. There are Persons, who would regard such an Incident with no small Degree of Solitude. Trivial as it is, it would damp their Spirits, and perhaps break their Rest.—One cannot but wonder, that People should suffer themselves to be affrighted at such *fantastical*, and yet be quite unaffected with *real*, Presages of their Dissolution. Real Presages of this awful Event address us from every Quarter. What are these *incumbent Glooms*, that overwhelm the World, but a *Kind of Pall* provided for Nature, and an Image of that long Night, which will quickly cover the Inhabitants of the whole Earth? What an Affinity has the Sleep, which will very soon weigh down my drowsy Eye-lids, with that State of intire Cessation, in which all my Senses

“ Appetite, SHALL NOT enter the Habitations of
 “ the Just. I rather choose to represent it, as a
 “ Case utterly impossible; and charge the Calamity
 “ not upon *divine Severity*, but *human Folly*. Such
 “ Persons, from the very Nature of Things, pre-
 “ clude themselves; they incapacitate their own
 “ Minds; and Contrarieties must be reconciled, be-
 “ fore They, in their unregenerate Condition, can
 “ be Partakers of those spiritual and sublime De-
 “ lights.” *John iii. 3.*

will be laid aside? The silent Chamber, and the Bed of Slumber, are a very significant Representative of the Land, where all Things are hushed, all Things are forgotten.—What meant that deep *Death-Bell Note*, which, the other Evening, saddened the Air? Laden with heaviest Accents, it *struck* our *Ears*, and seemed to knock at the *Door* of our *Hearts*. Surely, it brought a Message to surviving Mortals, and thus the Tidings ran: “Mortals, the Destroyer
“ of your Race is on his Way. The last Ene-
“ my has *begun* the *Chace*, and is *gaining Ground*
“ upon you, every Moment. His Paths are
“ strewn with Heaps of Slain. Even now his
“ Javelin has laid one of your Neighbours in
“ the Dust; and will soon, very soon, aim the
“ *inevitable Blow* at every one of your Lives.”

WE need not go down to the Charnel-House, nor carry our Search into the Repositories of the Dead, in order to find Memorials of our impending Doom. A Multitude of these Remembrancers are planted in all our Paths, and point the heedless Passengers to their long Home. I can hardly enter a considerable Town, but I meet the *funeral Procession*, or the *Mourners* going about the *Streets*. The *Atchievement* suspended on the Wall, or the *Crape* streaming in the Air, are silent Intimations, that both *Rich*
and

and *Poor* have been emptying their Houses, and replenishing their Sepulchres. I can scarce join in any Conversation, but mention is made of some that are given over by the Physician, and *hovering* on the *Confines* of Eternity; of others, that have just left their Clay amidst weeping Friends, and are gone to *appear* before the *Judge* of all the Earth. There's not a *News-Paper* comes to my Hand, but, amidst all its entertaining Narrations, reads several serious *Lectures* of *Mortality*. What else are the repeated Accounts, of *Age worn out* by slow-consuming Sicknesses, and of *Youth dashed to Pieces* by some sudden Stroke of Casualty? Of *Patriots*, exchanging their Seats in the Senate for a Lodging in the Tomb; and of *Misers* resigning their Breath, and (O relentless Destiny!) leaving their very Riches for others? Even these *Vehicles* of our *Amusement* are *Registers* of the *Deceased*, and the Voice of *Fame* seldom sounds, but in Concert with a *Knell*.—These Monitors croud every Place; not so much as the Scenes of our Diversions excepted. What are the *Decorations* of our *public Buildings*, and the most elegant *Furniture* of our *Parlours*, but the Imagery of Death, and Trophies of the Tomb? That marble Bust, and those gilded Pictures, how solemnly they *recognize* the Fate of *others*, and

speakingly remind us of our own! — I see, I hear, and Oh! I feel, this great Truth. It is interwoven with my Constitution. The frequent *Decays* of the Structure foretel its final *Ruin*. What are all the *Pains* that have been darted through my Limbs, what every *Disease* that has assaulted my Health, but the *advanced Guards* of the Foe? What are the *Languors* and *Weariness*, that attend the Labours of each revolving Day, but the more *secret Practices* of the Adversary, slowly undermining the earthly Tabernacle?

AMIDST so many Notices, shall we go on thoughtless and unconcerned? Can none of these *Prognostics*, which are sure as *Oracles*, awaken our Attention, and engage our Circumspection? *Noah*, 'tis written, *being warned of GOD, prepared an Ark*. O! imitate this excellent Example. Admonished by such a Cloud of Witnesses, be continually putting thyself in a Readiness for the last Change. Let not that Day, of which Thou hast so many *infallible* Signs, come upon thee *unawares*. — Get the *Ivy untwined*, and thy Affections disentangled from this enchanting World; that thou may'st be able to quit it, without Reluctance. Get the *dreadful Hand-writing cancelled*, and all thy Sins blotted out; that thou may'st depart in Peace, and have nothing

thing to fear at the decisive Tribunal. Get, O!
get thy Soul *interested* in the Redeemer's *Merits*,
and *transformed* into his sacred *Image*; then
shalt Thou be meet for the Inheritance of Saints
in Light, and may'st even desire to be dissolved,
and to be with CHRIST.

SOMETIMES, in my Evening Walk, I have
heard

— — — The wakeful Bird
Sing darkling, and, in shadieſt Covert hid,
Tune her nocturnal Note. MILT.

How different were the *Airs* of this charming
Songster, from those harsh and boding *Outcries*?
The little Creature ran through all the Varia-
tions of Music, and shewed herself Mistress of
every Grace that constitutes or embellishes Har-
mony. Sometimes, she swells a manly Throat,
and her Song kindles into Ardor; the *Tone* is so
bold, and *strikes* with such *Energy*, that you
would imagine the sprightly Serenader in the
very next *Thicket*. Anon, the *Strain languishes*,
and the mournful Minstrel melts into Tender-
ness. The melancholy Notes *just steal* upon the
Shades, and *faintly touch* your Ear; or, in soft
and sadly-pleasing Accents, seem to die along the

distant Vale. Silence is all Attention, and Night listens to the trilling Tale.

WHAT an Invitation is this, to slip away from the thronged City! This coy and modest Minstrel entertains only the *Lovers of Retirement.* Those that are *carousing* over their *Bowls*, or ranting at the riotous Club, lose this *Feast of Harmony.* In like manner, the Pleasures of Religion, the Joy of Reconciliation with GOD, the Satisfaction arising from the unbounded ravishing Prospect of a blissful Immortality; these are all lost to the Mind that is ever *in the Croud*, and dares not, or delights not, to *retire into itself.*—Are we charmed with the *Nightingale's* Song? Do we wish to *have it nearer*, and *hear it oftener*? O! let us seek a renewed Heart, and a resigned Will; a Conscience that whispers Peace, and Passions that are tuned by Grace; then shall we never want a Melody in our *own Breasts*, far more *musically pleasing* than sweet Philomela's sweetest Strains.

As different as the *Voices* of these Birds, are the *Circumstances* of those few Mortals, who continue awake.—Some are squandering, *Pearls*, shall I say, or *Kingdoms*? No; but what is unspeakably more precious, *Time.* Squandering this inestimable Talent, with the most senseless
and

and wanton Prodigality. Not content with allowing a *few spare Minutes*, for the Purpose of necessary Recreation ; they lavish many Hours, devote *whole Nights*, to that idle Diversion of *shuffling, ranging, and detaching*, a Set of painted Pasteboards. — Others, instead of this *busy Trifling*, act the Part of their *own Tormentors*. They even picquet themselves *, and call it Amusement ; they are torn by wild Horses, and yet term it a Sport. What else is the *Gamester's* Practice ; while his Mind is held in the most *anxious Suspense*, and agitated by the *fiercest Extremes* of Hope and Fear ? While the Dice are rattling, his Heart is throbbing ; his Fortune is tottering ; and, possibly at the very next Throw, the one *sinks* in the *Gulph* of Ruin, the other is *hurried* into the *Rage* of Distraction.

SOME, snatched from the *Bloom* of Health, and the *Lap* of Plenty, are confined to the *Chamber* of *Sickness*. Where they are constrained (O sad Alternative !) either to plunge into the everlasting World, in an *unprepared Condition* ; or else to think over all the *Follies* of a heedless Life, and all the *Bitterness* of approaching Death. The Disease rages ; it baffles the Force of Medicine ; and urges the reluctant Wretch to the

* In Allusion to a very painful Punishment, inflicted on Delinquents among the Soldiery.

Brink of the Precipice. While Furies rouse the Conscience, and point at the bottomless Pit below. — Perhaps, his *drooping Mother*, deprived long ago of the *Husband* of her *Bosom*, and bereft of all her other *Offspring*, is, even now, receiving the Blow which consummates her Misfortunes *. In vain she tries to assuage the Sorrows of a beloved Son; in vain she attempts, with her tender Offices, to prolong a Life dearer

* This brings to my Mind one of the deepest and most affecting *Mourning-Pieces* extant in Writing. The sacred Historian paints it in all the Simplicity of Style, and yet in all the Strength of Colouring.

— *When JESUS came nigh to the Gate of the City, behold! there was a dead Man carried out, the only Son of his Mother, and she was a Widow.* —

What a beautiful Gradation is here? Every fresh Circumstance is an additional Aggravation of the Calamity: Till, at length, the Description is worked up into the most finished Picture of exquisite and inconsolable Distress. — He was *a young Man*; cut off in the Flower of Life, amidst a Thousand gay Expectations, and smiling Hopes. — He was *an only Son*; the afflicted Mother's All: So that none remained to preserve the Name, or perpetuate the Family. — And, what rendered the Case still more deplorable, *She was a Widow*; left intirely desolate; abandoned to her Woes, without any to share her Sorrows, or comfort her under her Misfortunes. — Is not this a fine Sketch of the *Picturesque*? Who can consider the Narrative with any Attention, and not feel his Heart penetrated with a tender Commiseration? *Luke vii. 12.*

than her own. He faints in her Arms; he bows his Head, and drops in Death. The last Pang, which dislodges the unwilling Soul, rends an *only Child* from the yearning Embraces of a *Parent*, and tears away the *Support* of her *Age* from a disconsolate *Widow*.

WHILE These long for a *Reprieve*, Others invite the *Stroke*. Quite weary of the World, with a restless Impatience, they sigh for Dissolution. Some pining away under the *tedious Decays* of an incurable *Consumption*; or gasping for Breath, and almost suffocated, amidst an *Inundation* of *dropscical Waters*. On some a *relentless Cancer* has fastened its envenomed Teeth, and is gnawing Them, though in the midst of bodily Vigour, in the midst of pitying Friends, gradually to Death. Others are on a Rack of Agonies by *convulsive Fits* of the *Stone*: O! how the Pain writhes their Limbs; how the Sweat bedews their Flesh, and their Eye-Balls wildly roll! Methinks, the *Night* condole with these her distressed Children, and sheds *dewy Tears* over their sorrowful Abodes.—But, of all Mortals, They are the most exquisitely miserable, who groan beneath the *Pressure* of a *melancholy Mind*, or smart under the *Lashes* of a resentful *Conscience*. Though robed in Ermine, or covered with Jewels, the State of a Slave chained
to

to the Gallies, or of an Exile condemned to the Mines, is a perfect Paradise compared with theirs.

O! that the *Votaries* of *Mirth*, whose Life is a continued Round of Merriment and Whim, would bestow one serious Reflection on this *Variety* of human *Woes*. It might render them less enamoured with the *few languid Sweets*, that are thinly scattered through this Vale of Tears, and are invironed with such a *Multitude* of *ragged Thorns*. It might teach them, no longer to dance away their Years with a giddy *rambling Impulse*, but to aspire, with a *determined Aim*, after those happy Regions, where Delights unmingled flow.

CAN there be Circumstances, which a Man of *Wisdom* would more earnestly *deprecate*, than these several Cases of grievous Tribulation? There are; and, what is very astonishing, they are frequently the *Desire* and the *Choice* of Those, who fancy themselves the sole Heirs of Happiness: Those I mean, who are launching out into the *Depths* of *Extravagance*, and running excessive *Lengths* of *Riot*; who are prostituting their Reputation, and sacrificing their Peace, to their Lusts; who are sapping the Foundations of their Health in Debaucheries, and shipwrecking the Interests of their Families, in their Bowls;
and,

and, what is worse, are forfeiting the Joys of an eternal Heaven, for the sordid Satisfactions of the Beasts that perish, for the transitory Sensations of an Hour.—O! ye Slaves of Appetite, how far am I from envying your inordinate Revels? Ah! little are you sensible, that while Voluptuousness showers her Roses, and Luxury diffuses her Odours, they scatter Poisons also, and shed unheeded Bane. Evils, incomparably more malignant than the Wormwood and Gall of the sharpest Affliction.—Since Death is in the Drunkard's Cup, and worse than Poniards in the Harlot's Embrace, may it ever be the Privilege of the Man whom I love, to go without his Share of these pestilent Sweets *.

ABUNDANCE of living Sparks glitter in the Lanes, and twinkle under the Hedges. I suppose, they are the Glowworms, which have lighted their little Lamps, and obtained Leave, through the Absence of the Sun, to play a feeble Beam. A faint Glimmer just serves to render them perceivable, without tending at all to dissipate the Shades, or making any Amends for the departed Day.—Should a Traveller, dropping with Wet, and shivering with Cold, hover round this Mi-

* *Quam suave est suavitatibus istis carere!* Augustin.

mickry

mickry of Fire, in order to dry his Garments, and warm his benumbed Limbs : Should some unfortunate *Rover*, groping for his Way in a black and dark Night, take one of these *languid Tapers*, as a Light to his Feet and a *Lantern* to his *Paths* : How certainly would both the one, and the other, be frustrated of their Expectation ? — And are *They* more likely to succeed, who, neglecting that *sovereign Balm*, which distilled from the Cross, fly to any *carnal Diversion* to heal the Anxiety of the Mind ? Who, deaf to the infallible *Decisions* of *Revelation*, resign themselves over to the erroneous *Conjectures* of *Reason*, in order to find the Way that leadeth unto Life ? Or lastly, who apply to the *Froth* of this vain World, for a *satisfactory* Portion, and a *substantial* Happiness ? Their Conduct is in no Degree wiser ; their Disappointment equally sure ; and their Miscarriage infinitely more disastrous. To speak in the delicate Language of a sacred Writer, “ *They sow the Wind, and will reap the Whirlwind* *.”

To say the Truth, the *Pleasures* of the World, which we are *All* so prone to dote upon, and the *Powers* of fallen Reason, which *some* are so apt to idolize, are not only vain, but

* Hof. viii. 7.

treacherous.

treacherous. Not only a *painted Flame*, like these sparkling Animals; but much like those *unctuous Exhalations*, which arise from the marshy Ground, and often dance before the Eyes of the benighted Wayfaring Man. Kindled into a Sort of Fire, they personate a Guide, and seem to offer their Service: But, blazing with *delusive Light*, mislead their Follower into hidden Pits, headlong Precipices, and unfathomable Gulphs; where, far from his beloved Friends, far from all Hopes of Succour, the unhappy Wanderer is swallowed up and lost.

Not long ago we observed a very surprising Appearance in the western Sky. A *prodigious Star* took its flaming Route through those Coasts, and trailed, as it passed, a tremendous Length of Fires almost over half the Heavens. Some, I imagine, viewed the portentous Stranger with much the same anxious Amazement, as *Belshazzar* beheld the Hand-writing upon the Wall. Some looked upon it as a *bloody * Flag*, hung out by Divine Resentment, over a guilty World. Some read in its glaring Visage the Fate of Na-

• — *Liquida si quando nocte cometæ*
Sanguinei lugubre rubent. — VIRG.

tions,

64 CONTEMPLATIONS

tions, and the Fall of Kingdoms *. To others, it shook, or seemed to shake, *Pestilence* and *War* from its horrid Hair. — For my Part, I am not so superstitious as to regard, what every Astrologer has to *prognosticate* upon the Accession of a *Comet*, or the unusual Aspect of the Planets. Nothing can be more precarious and unjustifiable, than to draw such Conclusions from such Events: Since they are neither *preternatural* Effects, nor do they throw the Frame of Things into any *Disorder*. I would rather adore that omnipotent Being, who rolled them from his creating Hand, and leads them by his providential Eye through unmeasurable Tracts of *Æther*: Who bids them now approach the Sun, and glow with unsufferable Ardors †; now retreat beyond the utmost Bounds of our Planetary

———— *Crinemque timendi*
Sideris, & terris mutantem regna cometem.

LUCAN.

† “The Comet in the Year 1680, according to Sir *Isaac Newton*’s Computation, was, in its nearest Approach, above 166 times nearer the Sun than the Earth is. Consequently, its Heat was then 28000 times greater than that of Summer. So that a Ball of Iron as big as the Earth, heated by it, would hardly become cool in 50000 Years.” *Derh. Astr. Theol.* p. 237.

System, and make their Entry among other Worlds.

THEY are harmless Vifitants. I acquit them from the Charge of *causing*, or being *accessory to*, desolating Plagues. Would to GOD there were no other more formidable Indications of *approaching Judgments*, or *impending Ruin*. But, alas ! when *Vice* becomes predominant, and Irreligion almost epidemical ; when the *Sabbaths* of a jealous GOD are notoriously profaned, and that “ Name, which is great, wonderful, and “ holy,” is prostituted to the meanest, or abused to the most execrable Purposes ; when the *Worship* of the great Creator and Preserver of Mankind is banished from many of the most *conspicuous Families*, and it is deemed a Piece of *rude Impertinence*, so much as to mention the gracious Redeemer, in our *genteel Interviews* ; when it passes for an *elegant Freedom* of Behaviour, to ridicule the Mysteries of Christianity, and a Species of *refined Conversation* to taint the Air with lascivious Hints ; when those that sit in the *Scorner’s Chair* sin with a high Hand, and many of those that wear the *Professor’s Garb*, are destitute of the Power, and content themselves with the mere Form of Godliness ; when such is the State of a Community, there is Reason, too apparent Reason, to be horribly afraid. Such

Phænomena, abounding in the *moral* World, are not fanciful, but real Omens. Will not an injured GOD “be avenged on such a Nation as “this?” Will He not be provoked to “sweep “them with the Besom of Destruction *?”

O! that the Inhabitants of *Great Britain* would lay these alarming Considerations to Heart: The LORD of Hosts has commanded the Sword of *civil Discord* to return into its Sheath: But have we returned every one from his *evil Ways*? Are we become a renewed People, devoted to a dying Saviour, and zealous of good Works.—What mean those *Peals* of *Sobs*, which burst from the *expiring Cattle*?—What mean those melancholy Moans, where the lusty Drovers were wont to low †? What mean those Arrows of untimely

* *Isa. xiv. 23.* The eternal Sovereign, speaking of *Babylon*, denounces this Threatning, *I will sweep it with the Besom of Destruction.*—What a noble, but dreadful Image is here? How strongly and awfully pourtray’d! How pregnant also in its Signification? Intimating at once the *vile Nature*, the *total Extirpation* of this wicked People, and the *perfect Ease* with which the righteous GOD would execute his intended Vengeance.

† If these Papers should be so fortunate as to outlive their Author, perhaps, it may be needful to inform Posterity, that these Hints allude to a most terrible, contagious, and mortal *Distemper*, raging, at the Time of writing them, among the *horned Cattle*, in various Parts of the Kingdom.

untimely Death, discharged on our innocent and useful Animals? Are not these the *Weapons* of *Divine Displeasure*, and manifest Chastisements of a sinful Generation *? Has not GOD, "the God to whom Vengeance belongeth," still a Controversy with our Land? And who can tell, where the Visitation will end? What a *Storm* may follow these prelusive *Drops*? O! that we may "hear the Rod, and who hath appointed it." Taught by these *penal Effects* of our Disobedience, may we remove the *accursed Thing* from our Tents, our Practices, our Hearts! May we turn from all Ungodliness, before Wrath come upon us to the uttermost; before Iniquity prove our Ruin!

SOMETIMES, at this Hour, another most remarkable Sight amuses the Curious, and alarms the Vulgar. A Blaze of lambent *Meteors* is kindled; or some very extraordinary *Lights* are refracted in the Quarters of the North. Sometimes, the radiant Streamers meet and mingle,

F 2

infomuch

* Hinc lætis vituli vulgo moriuntur in herbis,
Et dulces animas plena ad præsepia reddunt.
Balatu hinc pecorum, & crebris mugitibus amnes,
Arentesque sonant ripæ, collesque supini.

V I R G.

infomuch that the Air seems to be all conficting Fire: At other times, they *start* from one another, and, like Legions in precipitate Flight, sweep each a separate Way through the Firmament. Now, they are *quiescent*; anon, they are thrown into a *quivering* Motion; presently, a nimble *Glance* diffuses them over the whole Hemisphere. Sometimes, with an Aspect *awfully ludicrous*, they represent extravagant and antic Vagaries; at other times, you would suspect that some invisible Power was playing off the *Artillery* of the *Skies*, and giving us the Flash, without the Noise.

THE Villagers gaze at the Spectacle, first with Wonder, then with Horror. A general *Panic* seizes the Country. Every Heart throbs, and every Face is pale. The Crouds that flock together, instead of diminishing, increase the Dread. They catch Contagion from each other's Looks and Words, while Fear is in every Eye, and every Tongue speaks the Language of Terror. Some see *hideous Shapes*, Armies mixing in fierce Encounter, or Fields swimming with Blood. Some foresee *direful Events*, States overthrown, or mighty Monarchs tottering on their Thrones. Others, scared with still more frightful Apprehensions, think of nothing but the *Day of Doom*.
“ Sure, says one, the unalterable Hour is struck,
“ and

“ and the End of all Things come.—See, replies another, how the blasted Stars look wan !
 “ Are not these the Signs of the Son of Man
 “ coming in the Clouds of Heaven ? — J E S U S
 “ prepare us, cries a Third, and lifts his Eyes
 “ in Devotion, for the Archangel’s Trump, and
 “ the great Tribunal !”

I F this *waving Brightness*, which plays innocently over our Heads, be so amazing to Multitudes, what inexpressible Consternation must overwhelm unthinking Mortals, when the *general Conflagration* commences ? The Day, the dreadful Day, is approaching, “ *In the which the
 “ Heavens shall pass away with a great Noise **,
 “ and

* 2 Pet. iii. 10. I have often thought this Verse an eminent Instance of that Kind of beautiful Writing, in which the very *Sound* bears a Sort of *Significance* ; at least, carries an exact Correspondence with the Sense. The original Expression — *ποιῆσθαι* — is one of the hoarsest and deepest Words in Language. Nothing could be more exquisitely adapted to affect the *Ear*, as well as impress the *Imagination*, with the Wreck of Nature, and the Crash of a falling World.—I scarce ever read this Clause, but it brings to my Mind that admired Description in *Milton*,

— On a sudden open fly
 With impetuous Recoil, and jarring Sound,

“ *and the Elements shall melt with fervent Heat ;*
 “ *the Earth also, and all the Works that are*
 “ *therein, shall be burnt up.*” That mighty
 Hand, which once opened the Windows from
 on High, and broke up the Fountains of the
 great Deep, will then unlock all the *Magazines*
 of *Fire*, and pour a *Second Deluge* upon the
 whole Earth. The vengeful Flames, kindled
 by the Breath of the Almighty, spread themselves
 from the Centre to the Circumference. Nothing
 can withstand their Impetuosity ; nothing can
 escape their Rage. Universal Desolation attends
 their Progress. Magnificent Palaces, and solemn
 Temples, are laid in Ashes. Spacious Cities,
 and impregnable Towers, are mingled in one
 smoaking Mass. Not only the Productions of
human Art, but the Works of *Almighty Power*,
 are Fuel for the devouring Element. The ever-
 lasting Mountains melt, like the Snows which
 cover

Th' infernal Doors, and on their Hinges grate
 Harsh Thunder. —————

Book II.

It is a pleasing Employ, and one of the noblest
 Offices of true Criticism, to point out these inferior
 Recommendations of the *Sacred Classics*. Though,
 I believe, the inspired Writers themselves, amidst
 all the Elevation and Magnificence of their Divine
 Ideas, disdained a scrupulous Attention to such *little*
Niceties of Stile.

cover their Summit. Even vast Oceans serve only to augment the Blaze. — O ! how shall I, or others, stand undismayed amidst the Glare of a *burning World*, unless the LORD JEHOVAH be our Defence ? How shall we be upheld in Security, when the Globe itself is sinking in a *fiery Ruin*, unless the Rock of Ages be our Support ?

BEHOLD ! a new Spectacle of Wonder ! The *Moon* is making her Entry into the Sky. See her rising in *clouded Majesty* : All grand and stately, but somewhat fullied in her Aspect. However, she *brightens*, as she *advances* ; and grows clearer, as she climbs higher : Till at length her Silver loses all its Dross ; she unveils her peerless Light, and becomes “ the Beauty of “ Heaven, the Glory of the Stars * ; ” delighting every Eye, and chearing the whole World, with the Brightness of her Appearance, and the Softness of her Splendors. — O ! thou *Queen* of the *Shades*, may it be my Ambition to follow this thy instructive Example ! While others are fond to transcribe the *Fashions* of *little Courts*, and to mimic Personages of inferior State, be it mine to imitate thy *improving Purity*. May my Con-

F 4

duct

* Ecclus. xliii. 9.

— *Lucidum cœli decus.* HOR.

duct become more unblemished, and my Temper more refined, as I proceed farther and farther in my probationary Course. May every sordid Desire wear away, and every irregular Appetite be gradually lost, as I make nearer Approaches to the celestial Mansions. Will not this be a comfortable Evidence, that I too shall shine in my adored Redeemer's Kingdom? Shine with a *richer* Lustre, than that which radiates from thy resplendent Orb; shine with an *unfading* Lustre, when every Ray, that beams from thy beauteous Sphere, is totally extinguished?

THE Day afforded us a Variety of entertaining Sight. These were all withdrawn at the Approach of Darknefs. The *Stars*, kindly officious, immediately lent us their Aid. This served to *alleviate* the *Frown* of Night, not to *recover* the Objects from their *Obscurity*. A faint Ray, scarcely reflected, and not from the intire Surface of Things, gave the straining Eye a very imperfect Glimpse; such as rather *mocked*, than *satisfied*, Vision.—But, now the Moon is risen, and has collected all her Beams, the Veil is again taken off from the Countenance of Nature. We once again behold the World's *great Picture*, not indeed in its late lively Colours, but
more

more *delicately shaded*, and arrayed in *softer Charms* *.

WHAT a *majestic Scene* is here ! How incomparably grand, and exquisitely fine !—The Moon, like an immense *crystal Lamp*, pendent in the magnificent *Ceiling* of the *Heavens* ; the Stars, like so many Thousands of *golden Tapers*, fixed in their *azure Sockets* ; all pouring their Lustre on spacious Cities and lofty Mountains, glittering on the Ocean, gleaming on the Forest, and opening a Prospect, wide as the Eye can glance, more various than Fancy can paint †.—We are forward to admire the Performances of
human

* ——— Now reigns

Full-orb'd the Moon, and with more pleasing Light
Shadowy sets off the Face of Things.— M I L T.

† As when the Moon, refulgent Lamp of Night,
O'er Heav'n's clear Azure spreads her sacred Light ;
When not a Breath disturbs the deep Serene,
And not a Cloud o'ercasts the solemn Scene ;
Around her Throne the vivid Planets roll,
And Stars unnumber'd gild the glowing Pole ;
O'er the dark Trees a yellower Verdure shed,
And tip with Silver ev'ry Mountain's Head ;
Then shine the Vales, the Rocks in Prospect rise,
A Flood of Glory bursts from all the Skies :

The

human Art. A *Landscape*, elegantly designed, and sketched out with a masterly Hand; a *Piece* of *Statuary*, that seems, amidst all the Recommendations of exact Proportion and graceful Attitude, to soften into Flesh, and almost breathe with Life; these little *Imitations* of Nature we behold with a pleasing Surprise; and shall we be less delighted at the inexpressibly noble, and completely finished *Original*?—The ample Dimensions of *Ranelagh's* Dome, the fine Illuminations of *Vaux-Hall* Grove, I should scorn to mention on such an Occasion, were they not the Objects of general Admiration. Shall we be charmed with those *puny Essays* of finite Ingenuity, and touched with no Transport at this *stupendous Display* of omnipotent Skill? at the shining Stateliness of the Firmament, that forms an *Alcove* for Ten thousand Worlds, and is *ornamented* with Myriads of everlasting Luminaries. Surely, this must betray not only a total *Want* of

The conscious Swains, rejoicing in the Sight,
Eye the blue Vault, and bless the useful Light.

Iliad VIII.

I transcribe these Lines, because Mr. *Pope* says, They exhibit, in the Original, the finest *Night-Piece* in Poetry. And, if they are so beautiful in *Homer's* Language, who can suspect their suffering any Disadvantage in that of his admirable *Translator*?

of *Religion*, but the most abject *Littleness* of Mind, and the utmost *Poverty* of *Genius*.

THE Moon, it is confessed, is no *luminous* Body. All the Brightness, which beautifies her Countenance, is *originally* in the Sun, and no more than *transmissively* in her. That glorious Orb is the Parent of Day, and the Palace of Light. From thence the Morning-Star gilds her Horn; from thence the Planetary Circles are crowned with Lustre; and from thence the Moon derives all her Silver Radiance. — It is pleasing to reflect, that such is the Case with the *all-sufficient Redeemer*, and his *dependent People*. We are replenished from his Fulness. What do we *possess*, which we have not *received*; and what can we *desire*, which we may not *expect*, from that never-failing Source of all Good? He is the Author of our Faith, and the Former of our Graces. In his unspotted Life, we see the *Path*; in his meritorious Death, the *Price*; and in his triumphant Resurrection, the *Proof* of Bliss and Immortality. If we offend, and fall Seven times a Day, He is the LORD our *Peace* *. If we are depraved, and our best Deeds very unworthy, He is the LORD our *Righteousness*.

Righteousness *. If we are blind, and even brutish in heavenly Knowledge, He is the LORD our *Wisdom* †; his Word dispels the Shades, his Spirit scatters the intellectual Gloom, his Eye looks our Darkness into Day. In short, we are nothing, and "CHRIST is all." *Worse* than *defective* in ourselves, "we are *complete* in Him." So that if we shine, it is with delegated Rays, and borrowed Light. We act by a Strength, and glory in Merits, not our own.—O! may we be thoroughly sensible of our Dependence on the Saviour! May we constantly imbibe his propitious Beams; and never, by *indulging Unbelief*, or *backsliding* into *Folly*, withdraw our Souls from his benign Influences! Lest we lose our Comfort and our Holiness, as the fair Ruler of the Night loses her Splendor, when her Urn is turned from its Fountain, and receives no more Communications of solar Effulgence.

THE Moon is incessantly *varying*, either in her Aspect, or her Stages.—Sometimes, her Face is *all Lustre*; anon, a *radiant Crescent* adorns her Brow; soon, it dwindles into a *slender Streak*; till, at length, all her Beauty vanishes, and she becomes a *beamless Orb*.—

Sometimes,

* Jer. xxiii. 6. † 1 Cor. i. 30.

Sometimes, she rises with the *descending Day*, and begins her Proceſſion amidſt admiring Multitudes ; ere long, ſhe deſers her Progreſs till the *midnight Watches*, and ſteals unobſerved upon the ſleeping World.—Sometimes, ſhe juſt appears on the *Edges* of the weſtern *Horizon*, and drops us a ceremonious Viſit ; within awhile, ſhe ſets out on her nightly Tour, from the oppoſite Regions of the Eaſt, *traverſes* the whole *Hemiſphere*, and never offers to withdraw, till the more refulgent Partner of her Sway renders her Preſence unneceſſary.—In a Word, ſhe is, while converſant among us, ſtill waxing or waning, and “ never continueth in one Stay.”

SUCH is the Moon ; and ſuch are all *ſublunary Things* ; expoſed to perpetual Viciffitudes.—How often, and how ſoon, have the faint Echos of *Renown* ſlept in *Silence* ; or been converted into the Clamours of *Obloquy* ? The ſame Lips, almoſt with the ſame Breath, cry Hoſanna and Crucify.—Have not *Riches* confeſſed their notorious Uncertainty, a Thouſand and a Thouſand times ? Either melting away, like *Snow* in our *Hands*, by inſenſible Degrees ; or eſcaping, like a *winged Priſoner* from its Cage, with a precipitate Flight.—Have we not known the *Bridegroom's Cloſet* an *Antechamber* to the *Tomb* ; and heard the Voice, that ſo lately pronounced

nounced the sparkling Pair Husband and Wife, proclaim an everlasting Divorce, and seal the Decree with that solemn Affelevation, “ Ashes “ to Ashes, Dust to Dust ? ” — Our *Friends*, though the Medicine of Life ; our *Health*, though the Balm of Nature, are a most precarious Possession. How soon may the one become a Corpse in *our Arms* ; and how easily is the other destroyed in *its Vigour* ? — You have seen, no doubt, a Set of pretty *painted Birds*, perching on your Trees, or sporting in your Meadows. You was pleased with the lovely Visitants, that brought Beauty on their Wings, and Melody in their Throats. But could you *ensure* the *Continuance* of this agreeable Entertainment ? No, truly : At the least disturbing Noise, at the least terrifying Appearance, they start from their Seats ; they mount the Skies ; and are gone in an instant, gone for ever. Would you chuse to have a Happiness, which *bears Date* with their *Arrival*, and *expires* at their *Departure* ? If you could not be content with a Portion, that is settled only for such a *fortuitous Term*, not of *Years*, but of *Moments*, O ! take up with nothing earthly ; set your Affections on Things above ; there alone is “ no Variableness or Shadow of turning.”

JOB is not a more illustrious Pattern of Patience, than an eminent Exemplification of this Remark. View him in his *private Estate*, he heaps up Silver as the Dust; he washes his Steps in Butter; and the Rock pours him out Rivers of Oil. View him in his *public Character*, Princes revere his Dignity; the Aged listen to his Wisdom; every Eye beholds him with Delight; every Tongue loads him with Blessings. View him in his *domestic Circumstances*, on one Hand he is defended by a Troop of Sons, on the other adorned with a Train of Daughters, and on all Sides surrounded by a very great Household. Never was *human Felicity* so consummate, never was *disastrous Revolution* so sudden. The Lightning, which consumed his Cattle, was not more terrible, and scarce more instantaneous. The joyful Parent is bereft of his Offspring, and his "Children are buried in Death." The Man of Affluence is stript of his Abundance, and he, that was cloathed in Scarlet, embraces the Dung-hil. The venerable Patriarch is the Derision of Scoundrels, and the late Darling of an indulgent Providence is become "a Brother to Dragons, a Companion of Owls."—Nor need we go back to *former Ages*, for Proofs of this afflicting Truth. In our Times, in *all Times*, the Wheel continues the same incessant Whirl;

and frequently those, who are *triumphing* To-day in the *highest Elevations* of Joy, To-morrow are *bemoaning* the Instability of mortal Affairs, in the *very Depths* of Misery *.—— Amidst so much *Fluctuation* and Uncertainty, how wretched is the Condition, which has no *Anchor* of the Soul sure and steadfast? May thy Loving-kindness, O G O D, be our *present Treasure*, and thy

* I believe I may venture to apply what the *Temanite* says of the Affairs of the Wicked, to all *sublunary Things*, as a true Description of their very great Instability. *Job xxii. 16.* — נהר יוצן יסודם rendered by *Schultens*, *Flumen fusum fundamentum eorum.* Their Foundation (or what they reckon their most solid and stable Possession) is a Flood poured out. — Which is one of the *boldest Images*, and most *poetical Beauties*, I ever met with in any Language, sacred or profane. In order to have a tolerable Conception of the Image, and a Taste of its Beauty, you must suppose a *Torrent* of Waters rushing in broken Cataracts, and with impetuous Rapidity, from a steep and craggy Mountain. Then, imagine to yourself an *Edifice* built upon the Surge of this rolling Precipice; that has no other *Basis*, than one of those *whirling Waves*, which constitute such a headlong Stream. — Was there ever such a Representation of transitory Prosperity, tending, with inconceivable Swiftness, unto Ruin? Yet such is every Form of human Felicity, that is not grounded upon J E S U S, and a Participation of his Merits, which is the *Rock of Ages*; on J E S U S, and his Image formed in our Hearts, which is the *Hope of Glory*.

thy future Glory our *reversionary Inheritance* !
Then shall our Happiness not be like the full-
orbed Moon, which is “ a Light that *decreaseth*
“ in its Perfection ;” but like the Sun, when
he goeth forth in his Strength, and knoweth no
other Change, but that of *shining more and more*
unto the perfect Day.

METHINKS, in this ever-varying Sphere, I
see a Representation, not only of our temporal
Advantages, but also of our *spiritual Accomplish-*
ments. Such, I am sure, is what the kind Par-
tiality of a Friend would call *my Righteousness* :
And such, I am apt to suspect *, is the Righ-
teousness

* I would not be understood, as measuring, in
this respect, *others by myself* ; but as taking my Esti-
mate from the unerring Standard of Scripture. And
indeed, proceeding on this Evidence, supported by
this Authority, I might have ventured farther than
a bare *Suspicion*. For “ there is not a *just* Man upon
“ Earth, that doeth Good, and *sinneth not*,” says
the Spirit of Inspiration by Solomon (*Eccles. vii. 20.*)
—Nay, such is the Purity, and so extensive are the
Demands, of the Divine Law, that an Apostle
makes a still more humbling Acknowledgement, “ In
“ *many Things we offend All.*” (*Jam. iii. 2.*) —
And the *all-wise Teacher*, who most thoroughly
knew our Frame, directs the most advanced, most
established, and most watchful Christians, to pray
daily for the Forgiveness of their *daily Trespases*.—

teousness of every Man living. Now we exercise it, in some few Instances, in some little Degrees. Anon, Sin revives, and leads our Souls into a transient, though unwilling Captivity. Now we are *meek*; but soon a ruffling Accident intervenes, and turns our Composure into a fretful Disquietude. Now we are *humble*; soon we reflect upon some inconsiderable or imaginary Superiority over others, and a sudden Elatement swells our Minds. Now, perhaps, we possess a *clean Heart*, and are warm with *holy Love*: But, O! how easily is the Purity of our Affections sullied, how soon the Fervor of our Gratitude cooled? And is there not something amiss even in our best Moments? Something to be *ashamed* of, in all we *are*; something to be *repented* of, in all we *do*?

WITH

To which Testimonies I beg Leave to add an elegant Passage from the *Canticles*, because it not only expresses the Sentiment of this Paragraph, but illustrates it by the very same Similitude. *She* (the Church) *is fair as the Moon, clear as the Sun*. Fair as the Moon, the lesser and changeable Light, in her *Sanctification*: Clear as the Sun, the greater and invariable Luminary, in her *Justification*. The inherent Holiness of Believers being imperfect, and subject to many Inequalities; while their imputed Obedience is every way complete, and constantly like itself. *Cant. vi. 10.*

WITH what Gladness, therefore, and adoring Gratitude, should we “submit to the Righteousness of our incarnate GOD;” and receive, as a Divine Gift, what cannot be acquired by human Works *! The Obedience of our glorious Surety is stiled by the Prophet, an *everlasting Righteousness* †. Such as was subject to no Interruption, nor obscured by the least Blemish, but proceeded in the same uniform Tenor of the most spotless Perfection.—This Righteousness, in another Sense, answers the Prophet’s noble *Description*; as its beneficial and sovereign Efficacy knows *no End*; but lasts through all our Life; lasts in the trying Hour of Death; lasts at the decisive Day of Judgment; lasts through every Generation; and will last to all Eternity.

SOMETIMES, I have seen that resplendent Globe *stript* of her *Radiance*; or, according to the emphatical Language of Scripture, “turned into Blood.” The *Earth*, interposing with its opake Body, intercepted the solar Rays, and cast its own gloomy *Shadow* on the Moon. The malignant Influence gained upon her sickening Orb; extinguished more and more the Remainers

G 2

* Rom. v. 17. —x 3. † Dan. ix. 24.

mainders of Light ; till at length, like one in a *deep Swoon*, no Comeliness was left in her Countenance ; she was totally *overspread* with *Darkness*.—At this Juncture, what a Multitude of Eyes were gazing upon the rueful Spectacle ? Even of those Eyes, which disregarded the Empress of the Night, or beheld her with Indifference, when, *robed* in *Glory*, and riding in her triumphal Chariot, she shed a softer Day through the Nations. But now, under these *Circumstances* of *Disgrace*, they watch her Motions with the most *prying Attention* ; in every Place her Misfortune is the Object of general Observation, and the prevailing Topic of Discourse in every Company.

Is it not thus with regard to *Persons* of *Distinction*, in their respective Spheres ? *Kings* at the Head of their Subjects, *Nobles* surrounded with their Dependents, and (after Names of so much Grandeur, may I be allowed to add) *Ministers* in their Parishes *, are each in a conspicuous Station. Their Behaviour, in its *minutest Step*, especially in any *Miscarriage*, will be narrowly surveyed, and critically scanned. Can there be a louder Call, to ponder the Paths of

* Ye are the Light of the World. A City that is set on an Hill cannot be hid. *Matth. v. 14.*

of their Feet, and to be particularly jealous over all their Ways? — Those, that move in inferior Life, may grossly offend, and little Alarm be given, perhaps no Notice taken. But it is not to be expected, that the least Slip in their Conduct, the least Flaw in their Character, will pass undiscovered. *Malice*, with her *Eagle-Eyes*, will be sure to discern them; while *Censure*, with her *shrill Trumpet*, will be as far from concealing them, as *Calumny*, with her *treacherous Whispers*, from extenuating them. A Planet may sink below the Horizon; or a Star, for several Months, withdraw its shining; and scarce one in Ten thousand perceive the Loss. But if the Moon suffers a transient Eclipse, almost half the World are Spectators of her Dishonour.

VERY different was the Case, when, at this late Hour, I have taken a solitary Walk on the *Western Cliffs*. At the Foot of the steep Mountain, the *Sea*, all clear and smooth, spread itself into an immense Plain, and held a watery Mirror to the Skies. Infinite Heights above, the *Firmament* stretched its azure Expanse, bespangled with unnumbered Stars, and adorned with the full-orbed *Moon*. She seemed to contemplate herself with a peculiar Pleasure, while the *transparent Surface* both received and returned her *Silver Image*. Here, instead of being covered

with Sackcloth, she shone with double Lustre ; or rather, with a Lustre multiplied in proportion to the *Number* of Beholders, and their various *Situations*.

SUCH, methinks, is the Effect of an *exemplary Behaviour* in Persons of exalted Rank. Their Course, as it is nobly *distinguished*, so it will be happily *influential*. Others will catch the diffusive Ray, and be ambitious to resemble a Pattern, so attracting, so commanding. Their amiable Qualities will not *terminate* in themselves, but we shall see them *reflected* from their Families, their Acquaintance, their Retainers. Just as we may now behold another Moon ; trembling in the Stream, glittering in the Lake, and displaying its lovely Impress on every Collection of Waters.

THE Moon, Philosophy says, is a Sort of *Sovereign* over the *great Deep*. Her Orb, like a Royal Sceptre, sways the Ocean, and actuates the fluid Realms. It swells the Tides, and perpetuates the reciprocal Returns of Ebb and Flow. By which means, the liquid Element purges off its Filth, and is preserved from being *putrefied* itself, and from *poisoning* the World.—Is the Moon thus operative on the vast Abyss ? And shall not the *Faith* of *eternal* and *infinite Delights*

Lights to come, be equally efficacious on this Soul of mine? Far above her argent Fields are Treasures of *Happiness*, unseen by mortal Eye, by mortal Ear unheard, and unconceived by any human Imagination. In that desirable World the most distinguished *Honours* also are conferred; in Comparison with which, the Thrones and Diadems of earthly Monarchs are empty Pageants, and childish Toys. Yonder Arch of Sapphire, with all its Spangles of Gold, is but the *Floor* of those Divine Abodes. What then are the *Apartments*, what is the *Palace*? How bright with Glories, how rich with Bliss?

O! YE Mansions of Blessedness; ye Beauties of my Father's Kingdom, that far outshine these Lamps of the visible Heaven, transmit your sweet and winning Invitations to my Heart. *Attract* and *refine* all my Affections. With-hold them from *stagnating* on the sordid Shores of Flesh; never suffer them to *settle* upon the *Lees* of Sense; but impress them with *Emotions* of restless *Desire* after sublime and celestial Joys. Joys, that will proceed on in one *everlasting Flow*, when Seas shall cease to roll: Joys, that will charm every Faculty with *unimaginable Pleasure*, when the Moon, with her waxing Splendors, shall chear our Sight no more.

END of Contemplations on the NIGHT.

7 OC 63

CONTEMPLATIONS
ON THE
STARRY HEAVENS.

*There dwells a noble Pathos in the Skies,
Which warms our Passions, proselytes our Hearts:
How eloquently shines the glowing Pole?
With what Authority it gives its Charge,
Remonstrating great Truths in Style sublime!*
Night Thoughts, N^o. 9.

THE HISTORY OF THE

CONSTITUTIONS

OF THE

STARRY HILL



THE HISTORY OF THE
CONSTITUTIONS
OF THE
STARRY HILL
ESTABLISHED 1714

THE HISTORY OF THE
CONSTITUTIONS
OF THE
STARRY HILL
ESTABLISHED 1714



The A R G U M E N T.

WALK on the Summit of a Hill.—The advancing Night withdraws the rural Prospect; opens the Beauties of the Sky.—Fragrance of the blooming Beans.—The Heavens, a most noble Field for the Display of the Divine Perfections.—Folly of Judicial Astrology; the right Use of contemplating the Stars.—A Sketch of the most remarkable Discoveries of our modern Astronomy.—The Sun, its enormous Size.—The Stars, are Centres of Systems; their inconceivable Distance.—Other Skies furnished with other Stars.—The Greatness of the Creator.—Fine Passage in Isaiah restored to its true Sense.—The preceding Observations inculcate Humility—Shew the Littleness of terrestrial Things—The stupendous Condescension of GOD, in his gracious Regards to the Children of Men—The prodigious Heinousness of human Guilt—The Richness of CHRIST's Atonement, and its complete Sufficiency for the most deplorable Cases of Sin and Misery.—The Power of GOD manifested in the Starry Heavens; this the Christian's

stian's constant Safeguard, and sure Resource.—The miserable Condition of the Ungodly, who have Omnipotence for their Enemy.—The unwearied Patience of this mighty Being.—The Wisdom of G O D, displayed in the Skies; what abundant Reason, to practise a chearful Submission to all his Dispensations; even when they seem most frowning and afflictive; all spring from Love, and will terminate in Good.—The Goodness of G O D, diffused through the vast System of material Things, and animated Creatures; but most illustriously exemplified in the Work of Redemption; the former View gives a most amiable, the latter a perfectly ravishing, Idea of the Divine Beneficence.—The Purity of G O D, faintly represented by the unspotted Firmament; the Defilement of sinful Man; the immaculate Excellence of his Surety.—The unmeasurable Dimensions of the Sky; the greater Extent of the Divine Bounty and Mercy; the last of those Subjects, being so peculiarly comfortable to Sinners, enlarged on.—What sustains the Arch of Heaven, and supports the Globes it contains; the same invisible Hand upholds the Christian in his Course.—The Faithfulness of G O D pourtrayed in the Stability of the heavenly Bodies, and Perpetuity of their Motions; the Unreasonableness of our Unbelief; Motives to an assured Faith.—Various Attributes of the Divine Nature

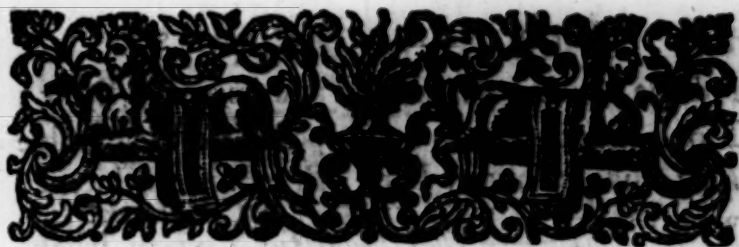
The ARGUMENT.

*Nature appear, with a glimmering Light, in the celestial Luminaries; all shine forth, with the fullest Lustre, in CHRIST JESUS. — The Dignity of Prayer, and Happiness of having GOD for our Portion. — All the rolling Worlds on high punctually obedient to their Maker's Orders; are a Pattern, in this Respect, and a Pre-vocative to the rational Creation. — The Multi-tude of Stars; especially in the Galaxy; the more attentively surveyed, the greater Number discover-ed; yet still they appear no larger than glittering Points; this applied to the unsearchable Treas-ures, of Wisdom in the Scriptures, of Merit in CHRIST, and Bliss in Heaven. — The celestial Bodies disposed in such a Manner, as to be de-lightful and serviceable to Man; adorn his Abode, and measure his Time; a silent Admonition this, to improve the Talent. — Brightness of the Stars; Encouragement to Fidelity in the Ministerial Of-fice. — Polar Star; its invariable Situation; Guide to the antient Mariners; such the Word of GOD to our Souls; Persuasive to attend its un-erring Dictates. — Variety in the Magnitude and Splendor of the Stars; different Degrees in the World of Glory; yet all the Blessed completely happy. — Projection and Attraction the grand Principles that actuate the Planetary System; Faith and Love bear much the same Proportion in
the*

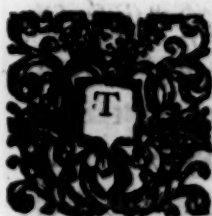
the Oeconomy of Christianity.——Vast Gradation in the Scale of universal Existence; all are the Objects of the Divine Care, and full of the Divine Presence.——Most beautiful Text in Isaiah illustrated.——The surpassing Worth of an immortal Soul; a Solitude for its final Welfare urged.——An unthinking View of the Skies is affecting; much more a rational and devout one.——The Scantiness of our Knowledge, with regard to the celestial Bodies; after all our Search, they are Objects of Admiration, rather than of Science; Exhortation to such Pursuits, as are of easy Attainment, and will be of everlasting Advantage.——Short Recapitulation of the Whole; and an Hymn of Praise suited to the sublime Occasion.

7 OC 63

CON-



CONTEMPLATIONS ON THE STARRY HEAVENS.

 HIS Evening, I exchange the nice Retreats of *Art*, for the noble Theatre of *Nature*. Instead of *measuring* my Steps under the Covert of an Arbour, let me *range* along the *Summit* of this gently rising Hill. — There is no Need of the leafy Shade, since the Sun has quitted the Horizon, and withdrawn his scorching Beams. But see, how Advantages and Inconveniences are usually linked, and chequer our Affairs below. If the *annoying Heat* ceases, the *Landscape* and its *pleasing Scenes* are also removed. — The majestic *Castle*, and the lowly *Cottage*, are vanished together. I have
lost

lost the aspiring *Mountain*, and its russet Brow ; I look round, but to no purpose, for the humble *Vale*, and its flowery Lap. The *Plains*, whitened with Flocks, and the *Heath*, yellow with Furze, disappear. The advancing Night has wrapt in Darkness the long-extended *Forest*, and drawn her Mantle over the Windings of the Silver *Stream*. I no longer behold that luxuriant Fertility in the Fields ; that wild Magnificence of Prospect, and endless Variety of Images, which have so often *touched me with Delight*, and *struck me with Awe*, from this commanding Eminence.

THE Loss, however, is scarce to be regretted, since it is amply compensated by the opening Beauties of the Sky. Here I enjoy a free View of the whole Hemisphere ; without any Obstacle from below, to confine the exploring Eye ; or any Cloud from above, to overcast the spacious Concave. 'Tis true, the lively *Vermilion*, which so lately streaked the Chambers of the West, is all faded : But the *Planets*, one after another, light up their Lamps ; the *Stars* advance in their glittering Train ; a Thousand and a Thousand Luminaries shine forth in successive Splendors ; and the whole *Firmament* is kindling into the most beautiful *Glow*. The *Blueness* of the *Æther*, heightened by the Season of the Year, and still more enlivened by the
Absence

Absence of the *Moon*, gives those *Gems* of Heaven the strongest Lustre.

ONE Pleasure more the invading Gloom has not been able to snatch from my Sense. The Night rather improves, than destroys, the Fragrance which exhales from the *blooming Beans*. With these the Sides of this sloping Declivity are lined, and with these the balmy Zephyrs perfume their Wings. Does *Arabia*, from all her spicy Groves, breathe a more liberal, or a more charming, *Gale of Sweets*? And what is a peculiar Recommendation of the rural Entertainments presented in our happy Land, they are alloyed by no Apprehensions of Danger. No *poisonous Serpent* lurks under the Blossom, nor any *ravenous Beast* lies ready to start from the Thicket.—But I wander from a far more exalted Subject. My Thoughts, like my Affections, are too easily diverted from the Heavens, and detained by inferior Objects. Away, my Attention, from these little *Blandishments* of the *Earth*, since all the *Glories* of the *Sky* invite thy Regard.

WE have taken a Turn among the *Tombs*, and viewed the solemn Memorials of the Dead; in order to learn the Vanity of mortal Things,
VOL. II. H and

10 CONTEMPLATIONS

and to break their soft Enchantment *.——We have survey'd the *Ornaments* of the *Garden*; not that the *Heart* might be planted in the *Parterre*, or take Root among the flowery Race; but that these *Delicacies* of a *Day* might teach us to aspire after a better *Paradise*, where *Beauty* never fades, and *Delight* is ever in the *Bloom* *.——A Third time we lighted the *Candle* of *Meditation*; and sought for *Wisdom*, not in the crowded *City*, or wrangling *Schools*, but in the silent and lonely *Walks* of antient *Night* *.——Let us once more indulge the contemplative *Vein*, and raise our *Speculations* to those *sublimar Works* of the great *Creator*, which the *Regions* of the *Sky* contain, and this dusky *Hour* unveils †.

IF we have discerned the *Touches* of his *Pencil*, glowing in the *Colours* of *Spring*; if we have seen a *Sample* of his *Beneficence*, exhibited in the *Stores* of *Nature*; and a *Ray* of his *Brightness*, beaming in the *Blaze* of *Day*; O! what an infinitely richer *Field* for the *Display* of his

* * * Alluding to the several Subjects of the Three preceding Essays.

† Night opes the *noblest Scenes*, and sheds an *Awe*, Which gives those venerable *Scenes* full *Weight*, And deep *Reception* in th' *entender'd Heart*.

Night Thoughts, N^o. 9.

on the STARRY HEAVENS. 11

his *Perfections*, are yonder Heavens. The *Heavens*, in the most emphatical Manner, declare the Glory of G O D. The Heavens are nobly eloquent of the Deity, and the most *magnificent Heralds* of their Maker's Praise. They speak to the whole Universe; for there is neither *Speech* so *barbarous*, but their Language is understood; nor *Nation* so *distant*, but their Voices are heard among them *.——Let me then, while Multitudes are buried in Sleep, listen to their silent Lectures. Perhaps, I may receive such impressive Manifestations of “the eternal Power and “Godhead,” as may *shed Religion* on my *Soul*, while I walk the solitary Shades; and may be a *tutelary Friend* to my *Virtue*, when the Call of Business, and the Return of Light, expose me again to the Inroads of Temptation.

THE *Israelites*, instigated by *Phrensy*, rather than *Devotion*, worshipped the Host of Heaven. And the Pretenders to *Judicial Astrology* talk of, I know not what, mysterious Efficacy in the different *Aspect* of the Stars, or the various *Conjunction* and *Opposition* of the Planets.——Let those, who are unacquainted with the sure Word of Revelation, give ear to these *Sons of Delu-*

H 2

sion,

* Psal. xix. 3.

sion, and *Dealers in Deceit*: For my Part, it is Matter of Indifference to me, whether the Constellations *shone* with *Smiles*, or *loured* in *Frowns*, on the Hour of my Nativity. Let CHRIST be my *Guard*; and, secure in such a Protection, I would laugh at their impotent Menaces. Let CHRIST be my *Guide*; and I shall scorn to ask, as well as despair of receiving, any predictive Information from such lifeless Masses.—What! shall “the Living seek to the Dead *?” Can these Bodies advertise me of *future Events*, which are unconscious of their *own Existence*? Shall I have Recourse to unintelligent stupid Matter, when I may apply to that *all-wise Being*, who, with one comprehensive Glance, distinctly views whatever is lodged in the *Bosom* of *Immensify*, or forming in the *Womb* of *Futurity*?—Never will I search for any *Intimations* of my *Fate*, but often trace my *Creator's Footsteps*, in yonder starry Plains. In the former Case, they would be *Teachers* of *Lyes*; in the latter, they are *Oracles* of *Truth*. In this therefore, this Sense only, I profess myself the Pupil of the Stars.

THE *Vulgar* are apprehensive of nothing more than a Multitude of *bright Spangles*, dropt over the

* Isa. viii. 19.

the *æthereal Blue*. They have no higher Notion of these fine Appearances, than that they are so many *golden Studs*, with which the Empyrean Arch is decorated.—But *studious Minds*, that carry a more accurate and strict Inquiry among the celestial Bodies, bring back Advices of a most astonishing Import. Let me just recollect the most material of these *stupendous Discoveries*, in order to furnish out proper Subjects for our Contemplation. And let the *Unlearned* remember, That the Scene I am going to display, is the Workmanship of that incomprehensible GOD, who is “perfect in Knowledge, and mighty in “Power:” Whose Name, whose Nature, and all whose Operations, are “great and marvelous:” Who summons into Being, with equal Ease, a *single Grain*, or *Ten thousand Worlds*.—To this if we continually advert, the Assertions, though they will certainly excite our *Admiration*, need not transcend our *Belief*.

THE *Sun*, they say, that seems to perform its daily Stages through the Sky, is, in this respect *, *fixed* and immoveable. 'Tis the great

H 3

Axle

* I say, *in this respect*, that I may not seem to forget, or exclude, the Revolution of the Sun round its own Axis.

14 CONTEMPLATIONS

Axle of Heaven, about which the Globe we inhabit, and other more spacious Orbs, wheel their stated Courses.—The Sun, they add, though seemingly *smaller* than the *Dial* it illuminates, is abundantly *larger* * than this whole *Earth*, on which so many lofty Mountains rise, and such vast Oceans roll. A *Line*, extending from Side to Side, through the Centre of that resplendent Orb, would measure more than Eight hundred thousand Miles; a *Girdle*, formed to go round its Circumference, would require a Length of Millions; and were its *solid Contents* to be computed, the Account would even confound our Understanding, and be almost beyond the Power of Language to express †.—Are we startled

* A hundred thousand times, according to the *lowest* Reckoning. Sir *Isaac Newton* computes the Sun to be 900,000 times bigger than the Earth. *Religious Philosopher*, p. 749.

† Dr. *Derham*, after having calculated the Dimensions of the Planets, adds, “Amazing as these Masses are, they are all far outdone by that stupendous Globe of Light the Sun; which, as it is the Fountain of Light and Heat, to all the Planets about it, so doth it far surpass them all in its Bulk: Its apparent Diameter being computed at 822,148 *English* Miles, its Ambit at 2,582,873 Miles, and its solid Content at 290,971,000,000,000.” *Astro-Theol.* Book I. Chap. II.

startled at these Reports of Philosophy? Are we ready to cry out, in a Transport of Surprise, How *mighty* is the *Being*, who *kindled* such a prodigious Fire, and *keeps alive*, from Age to Age, such an enormous Mass of Flame? Let us attend our philosophic Guides, and we shall be brought acquainted with Speculations, incomparably more enlarged and amazing.

THIS Sun, with all its attendant Planets, is but a very little Part of the grand Machine of the Universe. Every *Star*, though in Appearance no bigger than the *Diamond* that glitters upon a Lady's Ring, is really a *vast Globe*, like the Sun in Size and in Glory; no less spacious, no less luminous, than the radiant Source of our Day. So that every Star, is not barely a World, but the *Centre* of a magnificent *System*; has a Retinue of Worlds irradiated by its Beams, and revolving round its attractive Influence. All which are lost to our Sight in unmeasurable Tracts of *Æther*.—That the Stars appear like so many diminutive and scarce distinguishable *Points*, is owing to their immense and inconceivable *Distance*. Immense and inconceivable indeed it is, since a *Ball* shot from the loaded *Cannon*, and flying with unabated Rapidity, must travel, at this impetuous Rate, almost *Seven hundred thou-*

16 CONTEMPLATIONS

far'd Years *, before it could reach the nearest of those twinkling Luminaries.

CAN any Thing be more wonderful than these Observations? Yes: There are *Truths* far more *stupendous*; there are *Scenes* far more *unbounded*. As there is no End of the Almighty Maker's Greatness, so no Imagination can set Limits to his creating Hand.—Could you soar beyond the Moon, and pass through all the planetary Choir; could you wing your Way to the highest apparent Star, and take your Stand on one of those loftiest Pinacles of Heaven; you would there see *other Skies* expanded; *other Suns*, that distribute their inexhaustible Beams by Day; *other Stars*, that gild the Horrors of the alternate Night; and *other*, perhaps nobler *Systems*, established; established in unknown Profusion, through the boundless Dimensions of Space.—Nor does the Dominion of the great Sovereign terminate *there*. Even at the End of this vast *Tour*, you would find yourself advanced no farther than the *Frontiers* of Creation; arrived only at the *Suburbs* of the great JEHOVAH's Kingdom †.

ARE

* See *Religious Philosopher*, p. 819. — Where the exact Computation is 691,600 Years.

† See *Astro-Theology*, Book II. Chap. II. — Where

ARE we struck with Amazement at this little *Sketch* of a very little *Part* of his Works? How then must we be lost in Wonder, at the Consideration of the *CREATOR* himself? Who is so *high*, that He looks down on the highest of these dazzling Spheres, and sees even the *Summit* of Creation in a *Vale*; so *great*, that this prodigious *Extent* of Space is but a *Point* in his Presence, and all this *Confluence* of *Worlds* as the *lightest Atom*, that fluctuates in Air, and disports in the meridian Ray *.

O! THOU

Where the Author, having assigned various Reasons to support this Theory of our *modern Astronomers*, adds — “ Besides (the fore-mentioned) strong Probabilities, we have this farther Recommendation of such an Account of the Universe, that it is far more magnificent, and worthy of the infinite Creator, than any other of the narrower Schemes.” — Were not the System of the Universe thus enlarged and amazing, past the Reach of human Thought to fathom or comprehend, it would, in my Opinion, want the *Stamp* of *Omnipotence*; want that Signature of the Seal of Heaven, which knows not how to be counterfeited, and which declares the Maker to be, not only *unequalled*, but *infinite*.

* This puts me in mind of a very fine Remark on a *scriptural Beauty*, and a solid *Correction* of the common *Translation*, made by that learned, sagacious, and devout Expositor *Vitringa*. — Isa. xl. 15. We find it written of the supreme Being, That he *taketh*

18 CONTEMPLATIONS

O! THOU sublime and incomprehensibly glorious GOD, how am I overwhelmed with Awe, and sunk into the lowest Prostrations of Mind, when I consider thy “*excellent Greatness* *,” together with my own *Littleness* and *Insignificance*! — But how much more Reason have I to be

taketh up the Isles as a very little Thing. Which, our Critic observes, is neither answerable to the Import of the Original, nor consonant to the Structure of the Discourse. The Prophet had no Intention to inform Mankind, what the Almighty *could do*, with regard to the Islands, if he pleased to exert his Power: But his Design was to shew, how insignificant, or rather what mere Nothings *they are*, in his Esteem, and before his Majesty. — The Islands, says he, though so *spacious*, as to afford Room for the Erection of Kingdoms, and the Abode of Nations; though so *strong*, as to withstand, for many Thousands of Years, the raging and reiterated Assaults of the whole watery World; are yet, before the adored JEHOVAH, *small* as the minutest Grain, which the Eye can scarce discern; *light* as the feathered Mote, which the least Breath hurries away like a Tempest. — אִיִּים כְּדָק יִטּוֹל *Insulae sunt ut leve quid quod a volat.* The deep-rooted Islands are as the volatile Atom, which, by the gentlest Undulations of the Air, is *wasted to and fro* in perpetual Agitation.

* Psal. cl. 2. — רֹב גְּדֻלּוֹ — signifies (*multitudinem & magnitudinem*) both the *various* and *surpassing* Greatness of the Divine Majesty. That he is great in every possible *Kind*, as well as in the very highest *Degree*, of Perfection.

be even confounded at the Remembrance, that, *excessively mean* as I am, I should ever entertain one *conceited Apprehension* of myself; should feel the least Elatement of Thought, in the Presence of so majestic and adorable a Being.—Were I possessed of all the *high Perfections*, that accomplish and adorn the *Angels of Light*, yet, amidst all these noble Endowments, I would fall down in the *deepest Abasement* at thy Feet. Lost in the infinitely superior Blaze of thy uncreated Glories, I would even then be annihilated in thy Presence.—How much more ought I to maintain the most unfeigned Humiliation before thy Divine Majesty, who am not only *Dust* and *Asbes*, but a Compound of *Imperfection* and *Depravity*!

WHILE, beholding this vast Expanse, I learn that I am myself as Nothing, I would also discover the abject *Littleness*, which is in all *terrestrial Things*.—What is the *Earth*, with all her ostentatious Scenes, compared with this astonishing Furniture of the Skies? What, but a dim *Speck*, hardly perceivable in the *Map* of the *Universe*? It is observed by a very judicious Writer *, That if the *Sun* himself, which enlightens this Part of the Creation, was extinguished;

* Spect. Vol. VIII. N^o. 565.

guished; and all the Host of *planetary Worlds*, that move about Him, were annihilated; they would not be missed, by an Eye that can take in the whole Compass of Nature, any more than a *Grain of Sand* upon the Sea-shore. The Bulk of which they consist, and the Space which they occupy, is so exceedingly little in comparison of the Whole, that their *Loss* would scarce leave a *Blank*, in the Immensity of GOD's Works.— If then, not our Globe only, but this whole System, be so very diminutive; what is a Kingdom or a County? What are a few *Lordships*, or the so-much admired *Patrimonies* of those, who are stiled *Wealthy* *? When I measure them with my own little Pittance, they swell into enormous Dimensions. But when I take the boundless Universe for my Standard, how scanty is their Size, how contemptible their Figure? They shrink into proud and *pompous Nothings* †.

WHEN the keen-eyed *Eagle* soars above all the feathered Race, and leaves their very Sight below; when she winds her towering Way up the Steep of Heaven, and, steadily gazing on the

* *Juvat inter sydera vagantem divitum pavimenta ridere, & totam cum auro suo terram.*—Seneca.

† *Terrellæ grandia inania.* — Watt's *Hor. Lyr.*

the meridian Sun, accounts its *beaming Splendors* all *her own*: Does she then regard, with any Solicitude, the *Mote* that is flying in the Air, or the *Dust* which she shook from her Feet? And shall this eternal Mind of mine, which is capable of contemplating its Creator's Glory; which is intended to enjoy the Visions of his Countenance; shall this *eternal Mind*, endued with such *great Capacities*, and made for such *exalted Ends*, be so *ignobly ambitious*, as to sigh for the Tinsels of State; or so *poorly covetous*, as to grasp after ample Territories on a Needle's Point? —O! no: While such my Considerations, I feel my Sentiments expand, and my Wishes acquire a Turn of Sublimity. Such *vast Surveys* assimilate the Soul, and make her *truly great*. My throbbing Desires after worldly Grandeur, die away, and I find myself, if not possessed of Power, yet superior to its Charms.—Too long, must I own, have my Affections been *pinioned* by Vanity, and *immured* in this earthly Clod. But these Thoughts break the *Shackles* *: These Objects open the Door

- * The Soul of Man was made to walk the Skies,
 Delightful Outlet of her Prison here!
 There, disincumber'd from her Chains, the Ties
 Of Joys terrestrial, she can rove at large;
 There

22 CONTEMPLATIONS

Door of *Liberty*: My Heart, fired by such noble Prospects, weighs Anchor from this *little Nook*, and coasts no longer about its contracted Shores; dotes no longer on its painted Shells. The *Immensity* of *Things* is her Range, and an *Infinity* of *Bliss* is her Aim.

BEHOLD this immense Expanse, and admire the *Condescension* of thy GOD.—In this manner, an *inspired* and *princely* Astronomer improved his Survey of the nocturnal Heavens. *When I consider thy Heavens, even the Works of thy Fingers, the Moon and the Stars which Thou hast ordained;* I am smitten with Wonder at thy Glory, and cry out in a Transport of Gratitude, LORD, *what is Man, that Thou art mindful of him? or the Son of Man, that Thou visitest him *?*

“ How amazing, how charming, is that Divine
 “ Grace, which is pleased to bow down its *sa-*
 “ *cred Regards* to so foolish and *worthless* a
 “ *Creature!* Yea, disdains not, from the *Height*
 “ of infinite Exaltation, to extend its kind pro-
 “ vidential

There freely can respire, dilate, extend,
 In full Proportion let loose all her Powers.

Night Thoughts, N^o. 9.

* Psal. viii. 3, 4.

“ vidential Care to our most *minute* Concerns !
“ —But, that the everlasting Sovereign should
“ give his Son, to be our incarnate Saviour ;
“ what a Miracle is this of condescending Good-
“ ness ? Or rather, What are all *Miracles*, what
“ are all *Mysteries*, to this *ineffable Gift* ? ”

HAD the *highest Archangel* been commissioned to come down, with the *Olive-Branch* of Peace in his Hand, and to signify his eternal Maker's Readiness to be reconciled ; on our bended Knees, with Tears of Joy, and a Torrent of Thankfulness, we ought to have received the transporting News. But when, instead of such an angelic Envoy, He sends His *only-begotten Son*, his Son beyond all Thought illustrious, to make us the gracious Overture ; — sends Him from the “ Habitation of his Holiness and Glory,” to put on all the innocent *Infirmities* of *Mortality*, and dwell in a Tabernacle of Clay ; — sends Him, not barely to make us a *transien Visit*, but to abide *many Years* in our inferior and miserable World ; — sends Him, not to exercise Dominion over Monarchs, but to wear out his *Life* in the ignoble *Form* of a *Servant*, and, at last, to make his *Exit* under the infamous *Character* of a *Malefactor* ! Was ever Love like this ?

this? Did ever Grace stoop so low *? — Should
the

• This reminds me of a very noble Piece of sacred Oratory, where, in a fine Series of the most beautiful Gradations, the Apostle displays the admirably condescending Kindness of our Saviour. — *He thought it no Robbery, it was his indisputable Right, to be equal with the infinite, self-existent, immortal GOD. — Yet, in Mercy to Sinners, He emptied Himself of the incommunicable Honours, and laid aside the Robes of incomprehensible Glory. —* When He entered upon His mediatorial State, instead of acting in the grand Capacity of universal Sovereign, *He took upon Him the Form of a Servant.* And not the Form of those ministering Spirits, whose Duty is Dignity itself; who are throned, though adoring. — He took not on Him the Nature of Angels, but stooped incomparably lower. Assumed a Body of animated Dust, *and was made in the Likeness of Men; those inferior and depraved Creatures. —* Astonishing Condescension! but not sufficient for the over-flowing Richness of the Redeemer's Love. For, *being found in Fashion as a Man, He humbled Himself farther still.* Occupied the lowest Place, where all was low and ignoble. He not only submitted to the Yoke of the Divine Law, but also bore the Infirmities, and ministered to the Necessities of Mortals. He even washed the Feet of others, and had not where to lay His own Head. — Yea, He carried His meritorious Humiliation to the very deepest Degrees of possible Abasement. *He became obedient unto Death. —* And not to a common or natural Death, but a Death more infamous than the Gibbet, more torturous than the Rack — *even the accursed Death of the Cross.* Phil. ii. 6, 7, 8.

the Sun be shorn of all his *radiant Honours*, and degraded into a *Clod* of the *Vallies*; should all the Dignitaries of Heaven be deposed from their *Thrones*, and degenerate into *Insects* of a Day; *great, great* would be the Abasement. But *nothing* to Thine, most blessed JESUS; *nothing* to Thine, thou Prince of Peace; when for us Men, and for our Salvation, Thou didst not abhor the coarse Accommodations of the *Manger*, Thou didst not decline even the gloomy Horrors of the *Grave*.

'TIS well, the sacred Oracles have given this Doctrine the most reiterated and incontestable Evidence. Otherwise, so *prodigious* a *Favour* must stagger our Belief.—Could HE, who *launches* all these planetary Globes through the *illimitable* Void, and leads them on, from Age to Age, in their extensive Career; could He resign his Hands to be *confined* by the girding *Cord*, and his Back to be *ploughed* by the bloody *Scourge*? —Could HE, who crowns all the Stars with *inextinguishable Brightness*, be Himself defiled with *Spitting*, and disfigured with the *thorny Scar*? It is the greatest of *Wonders*, and yet the surest of *Truths*.

O! YE mighty Orbs, that roll along the Spaces of the Sky, I wondered, a little while ago, at your vast Dimensions, and ample Cir-

cuits. But now my Amazement ceases; or rather, is intirely swallowed up by a much more stupendous Subject. Methinks, your *enormous Bulk* is shrivelled to an *Atom*; your *prodigious Revolutions* are contracted to a *Span*; while I muse upon the far more elevated *Heights* and unfathomable *Depths*; the infinitely more extended *Lengths*, and unlimited *Breadths*, of this *Love of GOD in CHRIST JESUS* *.

WHILE I behold this vast Expanse, I see a Mirror, that represents, in the most awful Colours, the Greatness of the Creator's Glory, and the *Heinousness* of human *Guilt*.—*Ten thousand Volumes*, wrote on purpose, to display the Aggravations of my various Acts of Disobedience, could not so effectually convince me of their inconceivable Enormity, as the Consideration of that *all-glorious Person* †, who, to make an Atonement for them, spilt the *last Drop* of his *Blood*.—*I have sinned*, may every Child of *Adam* say, and *what shall I do unto Thee, O Thou Preserver of Men* ||? Shall I give my First-born for my Transgression, the Fruit of my Body for the Sin

* Eph. iii. 18, 19.

† *Quò quisque altius ascendit in agnitione CHRISTI, eò profundius peccati atrocitatem cognoscit.*

|| Job vii. 20.

on the STARRY HEAVENS. 27

Sin of my Soul? Vain Commutation! and such as would be rejected by the blessed GOD, with the utmost Abhorrence. — Will all the *Potentes*, that sway the Sceptre in a Thousand Kingdoms, *devote* their sacred and honoured *Lives*, to rescue an obnoxious Creature from the Stroke of Vengeance? Alas! it must cost more, vastly more, to expiate the Malignity of Sin, and save a guilty Wretch from Hell. — Will all the *Principalities* of *Heaven* be content to assume my Nature, and *resign* themselves to *Death* for my Pardon *? Even this would be too mean a Satisfaction

* *Milton* sets this Thought in a very poetical and striking Light. — All the Sanctities of Heaven stand round the Throne of the supreme Majesty. GOD foresees and foretels the *Fall* of Man; the *Ruin*, which will unavoidably ensue on his Transgression; and the utter *Impossibility*, of his being ever able to extricate himself from the Abyss of Misery.

He, with his whole Posterity, must die;
Die He, or Justice must; unless for Him
Some Other able, and as willing, pay
The rigid Satisfaction, Death for Death.

After which affecting Representation, intended to raise the most tender Emotions of Pity, the following Inquiry is addressed to all the surrounding Angels;

I 2

Say,

Satisfaction for inexorable Justice, too scanty a Reparation of GOD's injured Honour. So flagrant is human Guilt, that nothing, but a *Victim of infinite Dignity*, could constitute an adequate Propitiation. — *He* who said, "Let there be Light, and there was Light;" Let there be a Firmament, and immediately the blue Curtains floated

Say, heav'nly Pow'rs, where shall we find such Love?

Which of you will be mortal, to redeem Man's mortal Crime? and die, the Dead to save?

He ask'd; but all the heav'nly Choir stood mute, And Silence was in Heav'n. —

There is, to me at least, an uncommon Spirit and Beauty in the last Circumstance. — That such an innumerable Multitude of *generous and compassionate* Beings should be struck *dumb* with *Surprize* and *Terror*, at the very mention of *The deadly Forfeiture and Ransom set!* No Language is so eloquent as this *Silence*. Words could not possibly have expressed, in so emphatical a Manner, *The dreadful Nature* of the Task; the *absolute Inability* of any or all Creatures to execute it; the super-eminent and *matchless Love* of the eternal Son, in undertaking the tremendous Work; not only without Reluctance, but unsought and unimplored; with Readiness, Alacrity, and Delight. — In the last Clause of the Speech, I have followed the *Correction* of Dr. Bentley, for the Reasons assigned in his Note. *Paradise Lost*, Book iii. Line 209.

floated in the Sky; *He* must take Flesh; *HE* must feel the fierce Torments of Crucifixion; and pour out his Soul in Agonies, if ever such Transgressors are pardoned.

How *vast* is that *Debt*, which all the Wealth of both the *Indies* cannot discharge! How *vitiated* that *Habit* of Body, which all the Drugs produced by Nature herself, cannot rectify! But how much more *ruined* was thy *Condition*, O my Soul! how much more *heinous* were thy *Crimes*? Since nothing less than the Sufferings and Death of Messiah, the Son of GOD, and radiant Image of his Glory, could *effect* thy *Recovery*, or *cancel* thy *Iniquity*.—Therefore, though thou art not, perhaps, sunk so very deep in Pollution, as some of the most abandoned Profligates; yet remember the inestimable Ransom, paid to redeem thee from everlasting Destruction. Remember this; and “never open thy Mouth any more *,” either to *murmur* at the Divine Chastisements, or to *glory* in thy own Attainments. Remember this; and even “*loath* thyself †, for the Multitude of thy Pro-vocations,” and thy great Baseness.

ONCE more: Let me view this beautiful, this magnificent Expanse, and conceive some

I 3

juster

* Ezek. xvi. 63.

† Ezek. xxxvi. 31.

juster Apprehensions of the unknown *Richness* of my *Saviour's Atonement*.—I am informed by a Writer who cannot mistake, that the *High-Priest* of my Profession, who was also the Sacrifice for my Sins, is *higher than the Heavens* * ; more exalted in Dignity, more bright with Glory, than all the heavenly Mansions, and all their illustrious Inhabitants. If my Heart was humbled at the Consideration of its excessive Guilt, how do all my drooping Powers revive at this delightful Thought! The *poor Criminal*, that seemed to be *tottering* on the very *Brink* of the infernal Pit, is *raised*, by such a Belief, even to the *Portals* of Paradise. My Self-abasement, I trust, will always continue ; but my Fears are quite gone. I do not, I cannot, doubt the Efficacy of such a Propitiation. While I see a Glimpse of its matchless Excellency, and verily believe myself interested in its Merits, I know not what it is to feel any *misgiving Suspicions* ; but am steadfast in *Faith*, and joyful through *Hope*.

BE my Iniquities like Debts of Millions of Talents, here is more than full Payment for all that mighty Sum. Let the Enemy of Mankind, and *Accuser* of the Brethren, load me with *Invectives*,

* Heb. vii. 26.

vections, before the dreadful Tribunal ; yet this one *Plea*, a *Divine Redeemer died*, most thoroughly quashes every *Indictment*. For though there be much Turpitude, and manifold Transgressions, “ there is no Condemnation to those “ that are in CHRIST JESUS.” — Nay, were I chargeable with all the *vilest Deeds*, that have been committed in *every Age* of the World, by *every Nation* of Men ; even in this most deplorable Case, I need not sink into *Despair*. Even such Guilt, though grievous beyond all Expression, is not to be compared with the *Abundance* of *Grace* and *Righteousness*, which is in the *incarnate Divinity*. — How great, how transcendently glorious, are the *Perfections* of the adored JEHOVAH ? So great, so superlatively precious, is the *Expiation* of the dying JESUS. ’Tis impossible for the human Mind to *exalt* this Atonement, too highly ; ’tis impossible for the humble Penitent to *confide* in it, too steadily. The Scriptures, the Scriptures of eternal Truth, have said it, (exult my Soul in the Belief of it !) that the Blood on which we rely, is GOD’S *own Blood* * ; and therefore all-sufficient to expiate, omnipotent to save.

I 4

DAVID,

* Acts xx. 28.

DAVID, that most egregious Sinner, but more exemplary Saint, seems to have been well acquainted with this comfortable Truth. What else can be the Import of that very remarkable, but devout Declaration, *Thou shalt purge me * with Hyssop, and I shall be clean: thou shalt wash me, and I shall be whiter than Snow?* — “ I
 “ have been guilty, I must confess, of the most
 “ complicated and shocking Crimes; Crimes,
 “ inflamed by every aggravating Circumstance,
 “ with regard to Myself, my Neighbour, and
 “ my GOD. *Myself*, who have been blessed
 “ above Men, and the distinguished Favourite
 “ of Providence; *my Neighbour*, who, in the
 “ most dear and tender Interests, has been irre-
 “ parably injured; *my GOD*, who might justly
 “ expect the most grateful Returns of Duty, in-
 “ stead of such enormous Violations of his Law.
 “ Yet, all horrid and execrable as *my Offence*
 “ is, it is nothing to the superabundant *Merit*
 “ of

* Psal. li. 7. *Thou shalt purge*. I prefer this Translation, before the new one. Because this speaks the Language of a more *stedfast Belief*, and gives the *highest Honour* to the Divine Goodness. Were the Words intended to bear no more than the common *petitionary Sense*, and not to be expressive of a noble *Plerophory of Faith*, they would rather have been —
 חטאתי and כבסני *Imperative*.

“ of that *great Redeemer*, who was promised
 “ from the Foundations of the World ; in
 “ whom all my Fathers trusted ; who is the
 “ Hope of all the Ends of the Earth. Though
 “ my Conscience be more *loathsome*, with adul-
 “ terous Impurity, than the *Dunghil* ; though
 “ the most barbarous of Murders has rendered
 “ it even *black* as the Gloom of *Hell* ; yet,
 “ washed in ‘ the Fountain opened for Sin and
 “ for Uncleanness *,’ I shall be—I say not,
 “ *pure only*, this were a Disparagement to the
 “ Efficacy of the Saviour’s Death ; but I shall
 “ be fair *as* the *Lily*, and white *as* the *Snow*.
 “ Nay, let me not derogate from the glorious
 “ Object of my Confidence, cleansed by this
 “ sovereign Stream, I shall be *fairer* than the
 “ full-blown Lily, *whiter* than the new-fallen
 “ Snows.”

POWER, saith the Scripture, *belongeth unto*
GOD †.—And in what majestic Lines is this
 Attribute of *JEHOVAH* written, throughout
 the whole Volume of the Creation ? Especially,
 through those magnificent Pages unfolded in yon-
 der starry Regions. Which are therefore stiled,
 by the sweet and sublime Singer of *Israel*,
 “ The

* Zech. xiii. 1.

† Psal. lxii. 11.

34 CONTEMPLATIONS

“ The Firmament of his Power *.” Because, the grand *Exploits* of *Omnipotence* are there displayed with the utmost Pomp, and *recorded* in the most *legible Characters*.

W H O, that looks upward to the midnight Sky, and with an Eye of Reason beholds its rolling Wonders, can forbear inquiring, Of *what* were those mighty Orbs *formed*? — Amazing to relate! They were produced without Materials. They sprung from Emptiness itself. The *stately Fabric* of universal Nature emerged out of *Nothing*. — What *Instruments* were used by the supreme Architect, to *fashion* the Parts with such exquisite Niceness, and give so beautiful a *Polish* to the Surface? With what were the various Pieces of the complicated Structure *cemented*, and how was all *connected* into one finely-proportioned, and nobly finished Whole? — A bare *Fiat* accomplished all. LET THEM BE, said G O D. He added no more; and immediately the wonderful Structure arose; adorned with every Beauty; displaying innumerable Perfections; and declaring, amidst admiring Seraphs, *is* great Creator’s Praise. “ By the *Word* of “ the LORD were the Heavens made, and all the “ Host

* Psal. cl. 1.

“ Host of them by the *Breath* of his Mouth *.”

—What wonderful *Force fixed* some of those vast Globes, on an immoveable Basis? What irresistible Impulse *bowled* others, through the dark Profound? And what coercive Energy *confined* their impetuous Courses, within the nicest, strictest Bounds?—Nothing but his *sovereign Will*. For all Things were at first constituted, and all to this Day abide, “ according to his Ordinance.”

To *speak* such a Multitude of enormous Bodies into *Being*;—to *launch* them through the Spaces of the Sky, as an *Arrow* from the Hand of a Giant;

* If this Thought is admitted a Second time, and suffered to ennoble the next Paragraph; it is partly, because of its uncommon *Sublimity*; partly, because it awakens the most *grand Idea* of creating Power; and partly, because the *Practice* of the *Psalmist*, an Authority too great to be controverted, is my Precedent.—The beautiful Stanza quoted from *Psal.* xxxiii. 6. is a Proof, how thoroughly the royal Poet entered into the *Majesty* of the *Mosaic Narration*: The Repetition of the Sentiment, *ver.* 9. intimates, how peculiarly he was charmed with that *noble Manner* of describing the Divine Operations: While the Turn of his own Compositions shews, how perfectly he possessed the same *elevated Way* of thinking. And this, long before *Longinus* wrote the celebrated Treatise, which has taught both the Heathen, as well as the Christian World, to admire the *Dignity of the Jewish Legislator's Stile*. Vid. *Longin. de Sublim.* Sect. IX.

Giant ; — to impress on such *unwieldy Masses* a Motion, far outstripping the Swiftneſs of the *winged Creation* * ; — and to *continue* them in the ſame *rapid Whirl*, for Thouſands and Thouſands of Years ; — What an aſtoniſhing Inſtance of infinite Might is this ! — Can any thing be *impoſſible* to the LORD, the LORD GOD, the Creator and Controuler, of all the Ends of the Earth, all the Borders of the Univerſe ? Rather, is not all that we *count difficult, perfect Eaſe* to that glorious Being, who only ſpake, and the World was made † : Who only gave Command, and the ſtupendous Axle was lodged faſt, the lofty
Wheels

* To give *one* Inſtance of this Remark. — The *Earth*, in the diurnal Revolution, which it performs on its own Axis, *whirls about* at the Rate of above a *Thouſand Miles an Hour*. And as the great Orbit, which it deſcribes annually round the Sun, is reckoned at 540 Millions of Miles, it muſt *travel* near a *Million and Half*, each *Day*. — What an *amazing Force* muſt be requiſite, to *protrude* ſo vaſt a Globe ; and *wheel* it on, loaded as it is with huge Mountains, and ponderous Rocks, at ſuch a prodigious Degree of *Rapidity*. It ſurpaſſes human Conception. — How natural, how pertinent, how almoſt neceſſary, after ſuch an Obſervation, is the Acknowledgement made by holy *Job* : *I know that THOU canſt do every Thing, and that no Thought can be withholden from Thee*. Chap. xlii. 2.

† Pſal. xxxiii. 9.

Wheels moved complete? — What a sure Defence, O my Soul, is this everlasting Strength of thy GOD? Be this thy continual *Refuge* in the Article of *Danger*; this thy never-failing *Resource* in every Time of *Need*.

WHAT cannot this uncontrollable Power of the great JEHOVAH effect for his People? Be their *Miseries* ever so galling, cannot this GOD *relieve* them? Be their *Wants* ever so numerous, cannot this GOD *supply* them? Be their *Corruptions* within ever so inveterate, or their *Temptations* without ever so importunate, cannot this mighty, mighty GOD *subdue* the one, and *fortify* them against the other? — Should *Trials*, with an incessant Vehemence, *sift* thee as Wheat; should *Tribulation*, with a Weight of Woes, almost *grind* thee to Powder; should *Pleasure*, with her bewitching Smiles, solicit thee to *delicious Ruin*; yet “hold thee fast by GOD,” and lay thy Help upon Him that is omnipotent*.

Thou

* It is a most *charming Description*, as well as *comfortable Promise*, which we find in *Isa. xl. 29, 30, 31.* — HE giveth Power to the Feeble; and to them that have no Might at all, He not only imparteth, but *increaseth Strength*; making it to abound, where it did not so much as exist. — Without this Aid of JEHOVAH, even the *Youths*, whose generous Ardor scarce any thing could repress, shall become
languid

38 CONTEMPLATIONS

Thou canst not be involved in such *calamitous*
Circumstances,

languid in their Work, and *wearry* in their Course. And the young Men, in the very Prime of their Vigour, to whose Resolution and Abilities nothing seemed impracticable, shall not only not succeed, but utterly fall, and miscarry in their Enterprizes.— Whereas, they that wait upon the LORD, and rely on his Grace, shall renew their Strength; Difficulties shall animate, and Toil invigorate them; they shall mount up, as with soaring Wings, above all Opposition; they shall be carried through every Discouragement, as Eagles cleave the yielding Air: They shall run, with Speed and Alacrity, the Way of God's Commandments, and not be weary: They shall hold on, with Constancy and Perseverance, in those peaceful Paths, and not faint; but arrive at the End of their Progress, and win the Prize of their High Calling.

To this most chearing Doctrine, permit me to add its no less beautiful and delightful Contrast. Eliphaz, speaking of the Enemies of the Righteous, says — לא נכחד קימנו — which is rendered by a great Critic in sacred Learning, *Nihil excisum saltio nobis adversaria*. — We should reckon, our Language acquitted itself tolerably well, if, when depretiating the Abilities of an Adversary, it should represent them weak as the scorched Thread, feeble as the dissolving Smoke. But these are cold Forms of Speech compared with the Eloquence of the East. According to the Genius of our Bible, *All the Power, that opposes the godly, is a mere Nothing*; or, to speak with a more emphatical Air of Contempt, *a destroyed, an extirpated Nothing*. — Admire this Expression, ye that are charmed

Circumstances, or exposed to such *imminent Peril*, but thy GOD, whom thou serveſt, is able to *ſupport* thee under the one, and to *deliver* thee from the other.—O! let me not diſhonour the unlimited Greatneſs of his Power. *He is able*, not only to accompliſh what I have been ſpeak- ing, but to *do exceeding abundantly above all that we can aſk, or think* *.

O!

charmed with daring Images, and (what Tully calls *verbum ardens*) a ſpirited and glowing Diſtion. — Remember this Declaration, ye that fight the good Fight of Faith. The *united Force* of all your Enemies, be it ever ſo *formidable* to the Eye of Fleſh, is, before your Almighty Guardian, *Nihil nihiliſſimum*, not only Nothing, but *leſs than Nothing*, and Vanity. Job xxii. 20.

* I ſhould, in this Place, avoid ſwelling the Notes any farther, was it not to take Notice of the inimitable Paſſage quoted above, and to be found Eph. iii. 20.—Which, if I do not greatly miſtake, is the moſt noble Representation of Divine Power, that it is poſſible for Words to frame.—To do all that our Tongue can *aſk*, is a Miracle of Might. But we often *think* more than we can expreſs, and are actuated “with *Groanings unutterable*.” Yet, to answer theſe *vaſt Deſires*, is not *beyond* the Accompliſhment of our heavenly Father.—Nay, to make all Manner of Bleſſings commensurate to the *largeſt Stretch* of human Expectations, is a *ſmall Thing* with the GOD of Glory. He is able to do *above all*, that the moſt enlarged Apprehenſion can imagine; yea,

40 CONTEMPLATIONS

O! THE *wretched Condition* of the *Wicked*, who have this LORD of all Power for their Enemy! O! the *desperate Madness* of the *Ungodly*, who provoke the Almighty to Jealousy!—Be-sotted Creatures! are you able to contend with your Maker, and enter the Lists against incensed Omnipotence? Can you *bear* the Fierceness of his Wrath, or sustain the Vengeance of his lifted Arm? At his Presence, though *awfully serene*, the *Hills* melt like Wax, and the “*Mountains* “skip like frightened Lambs.” At the least *Intimations* of his *Displeasure*, the *Foundations* of Nature rock, and the “*Pillars of Heaven* “tremble.” How then can a *withered Leaf* endure, when “his Lips are full of Indignation, “and his Tongue as a devouring Fire?”—— Or can any thing *screen* a guilty Worm, when the great and terrible GOD, shall *whet his glittering Sword*, and his *Hand take hold on* inexorable Judgment? When *that Hand*, which *shoots the Planets*, *Masses of excessive Bulk* *, with such

yea, to do *abundantly more*, *exceeding abundantly more*, than the Mind itself, in the *utmost Exertion* of its Faculties, is capable of *wisbing*, or knows how to *conceive*.

* One of the Planets (*Saturn*) is supposed to be 427,218,300,000,000 Miles in Bulk. The largest of

such surprising Celerity, through the Sky; *that Hand*, which darts the *Comets*, to such unmeasurable Distances; beyond the Limits of our Solar System, beyond the Pursuit of the strongest Eye; when THAT HAND is stretched out to *punish*, can the Munition of Rocks, the Intervention of Seas, or even interposing Worlds, *divert* the Blow? Consider this, *Ambition*; and bow thy haughty Crest. Consider this, *Disobedience*; and bend thy iron Sinew. O! consider this, All ye that *forget*, or *affront*, the tremendous JEHOVAH. He has Ten thousand Lightnings to scorch you to Ashes, Ten thousand Thunders to crush you to Dust. Or, what is unspeakably more dreadful, He has an *Army of Terrors* even in the *Look* of his angry *Countenance*: His very Frown is worse than Destruction.

I CANNOT dismiss this Subject, without admiring the *Patience* of the blessed GOD. Who, though so “strong and powerful, yet is provoked “every Day.”—Surely; as is his Majesty, so is his Mercy; his Pity altogether commensurate to his Power. If I *vilify* but the *Name* of an

of the Planets (*Jupiter*) is computed at 920,011, 200,000,000 Miles.—Such enormous Bulk! winged with such prodigious Speed.—It raises Astonishment beyond Expression.—*Who would not fear THEE, O King of Nations?* Jerem. x. 7.

earthly Monarch, I lose my *Liberty*, and am confined to the Dungeon. If I *appear in Arms*, and draw the Sword, against my national Sovereign, my *Life* is forfeited, and my very Blood will scarce atone for the Crime. But *Thee* I have dishonoured, O! thou King immortal and invisible; against Thee my Breast has cherished *secret Disaffection*, my Behaviour has risen up in *open Rebellion*; and yet I am spared, I am preserved. Instead of banishing me from thy Presence, I sit at thy Table, and am fed from thy Hand. Instead of *pursuing* me with *Thunderbolts* of Vengeance, thy *Favours* surround me on every Side. That Arm, that injured Arm, which might justly fall with irretrievable Ruin on a Traitor's Head, is most graciously stretched out, to caress him with the tenderest Endearments, to cherish him with every Instance of parental Kindness.—O! thou mightiest, thou best of Beings, how am I pained at my very Soul, for such shameful and odious Disingenuity! Let me always *abominate* myself as the basest of Creatures, but *adore* that unwearied Long-suffering of thine, which refuses to be irritated; *love* that unremitted Goodness, which no Acts of Ingratitude could stop, or so much as check, in its gracious Current. O! let this *stubborn Heart*, which Duty could not bind, which Threatnings could not

not awe, be the Captive, the *willing Captive*, of such triumphant Beneficence.

I HAVE often been struck with Wonder at that Almighty Skill, which *weighed* the Mountains in Scales, and the Hills in a Balance; which *proportioned* the Waters in the Hollow of its Hand, and *adjusted* the Dust of the Earth *

K 2

by

* *The Dust of the Earth*, in this sublime Scripture, signifies the *dry Land*, or *solid Part* of our Globe. Which is placed in Contradistinction to the whole Collection of *fluid Matter*, mentioned in the preceding Clause. — Perhaps, this remarkable Expression may be intended to intimate, not only the *extreme Niceness*, which stated the Dimensions of the round World, in general or in the gross; but also that *particular Exactness*, with which the very smallest Materials, that constitute its Frame (not excepting each individual Atom) were calculated and adjusted: — *q. d.* 'Tis a small Thing to say, No such enormous Redundancies, as unnecessary Ridges of Mountains, were suffered to subsist. There was not so much as the *least Grain* of Sand *superfluous*, or a *single Particle* of Dust *deficient*. — As the grand Aim of the Description is, to celebrate the *consummate Wisdom* exemplified in the Creation, and to display that *perfect Proportion*, with which every Part tallies, coincides, and harmonizes, with the Whole; I have taken Leave to alter the Word of our *English Translation comprehend*, and introduce in its stead a Term, equally faithful to the *Hebrew*, and more significative of the Prophet's precise Idea. *Isa. xl. 12.*

by a Measure. But how much more marvellous is that magnificent Œconomy, which *poised* the *Stars* with inexpressible Nicety, and *meted out* the *Heavens* with a *Span*? Where all is prodigiously vast; immensely various; and yet more than mathematically exact. Surely, the *Wisdom* of *GOD* manifests itself in the *Skies*, and shines in those lucid *Orbs*: Shines on the contemplative Mind, with a Lustre incomparably brighter, than that which their united Splendors transmit to the Eye.—Behold that countless Multitude of *Globes*; consider their amazing Bulk; regard them as the *Sovereigns* of so many *Systems*, each accompanied with his *planetary Equipage*. Upon this Supposition, what a Multiplicity of mighty Spheres must be perpetually running their Rounds, in the upper Regions? Yet, none mistake their Way, or *wander* from the Goal; though they pass through *trackless* and unbounded Fields. None *fly off* from their *Orbits*, into extravagant Excursions; none *press in* upon their *Centre*, with too near an Approach. None *interfere* with each other in their perennial Passage, or *intercept* the kindly Communications of another's Influence *. But all their Rotations proceed in eternal

* The Interception of Light, by means of an *Eclipse*, happens very rarely: And then, is of so short

eternal Harmony; *keeping* such *Time*, and *observing* such *Laws*, as are most exquisitely adapted to the Perfection of the Whole.

WHILE I contemplate this “excellent Wisdom which made the Heavens,” and attunes all their Motions; how am I abashed at that Mixture of *Arrogance* and *Folly*, which has, at any time, inclined me to *murmur* at thy *Dispensations*, O LORD! What is this but a Sort of implicit Treason against thy Supremacy, and a tacit Denial of thy infinite Understanding? Hast Thou so *regularly placed* such a wonderful Diversity of Systems, through the boundless Universe? Dost Thou *continually superintend* all their Circumstances, with a Sagacity, that never mistakes the minutest *Tittle* of *Propriety*? And shall I be so unaccountably stupid, as to question the *Justness* of thy *Discernment*, in “choosing
“my Inheritance, and fixing the Bounds of my
“Habitation?” — Not a *single Erratum* in modelling the Structure; determining the Distance *,
and

short a Continuance, as not to be at all inconvenient: Is attended with such *Circumstances*, as render it rather useful, than prejudicial.

* The Sun in particular (and let this serve as a Specimen of that most geometrical Exactness, with which the other celestial Bodies are constituted, and all their Circumstances regulated) the Sun is formed

and conducting the Career of *unnumbered Worlds!*
 And shall my peevish Humour presume to *cen-*
sure thy *Interposition*, with regard to the Affairs
 of *one* inconsiderable *Creature*; whose Stature is
 a Span, and his present Duration little more
 than a Moment?

O! THOU GOD, “in whose Hand my
 “Breath is, and whose are all my Ways,” let
 such Sentiments as now possess my Thoughts, be
 always lively on my Heart! These shall compose
 my Mind into a *cheerful* Acquiescence, and
thankful Submission, even when Afflictions *gall*
 the *Sense*, or Disappointments *break* my *Schemes*.
 Then shall I, like the *grateful Patriarch* *, in
 all the Changes of my Condition, and even in
 the Depths of Distress, *erect* an *Altar* of adoring
 Resignation, and inscribe it with the Apostle’s
Motto, To GOD only wise. Then, shouldst
 Thou give me Leave to be the Carver of my
 own

of such a determinate Magnitude, and placed at such
 a convenient Distance — “as not to annoy, but
 “only refresh us, and nourish the Ground with its
 “kindly Warmth. If it was *larger*, it would set
 “the Earth on Fire; if *smaller*, it would leave it
 “frozen. If it was *nearer* us, we should be scorched
 “to Death; if *farther* from us, we should not be
 “able to live for Want of Heat.” *Stackhouse’s*
History of the Bible.

* See Gen. xii. 7, 8.

own Fortunes, I would humbly desire to relinquish the Grant, and recommit the Disposal of myself to thy unerring Beneficence. Fully persuaded, that *thy Counsels*, though contrary to my froward Inclinations, or even afflictive to my Flesh, are incomparably more eligible, than the *blind Impulse* of my own Will, however soothing to animal Nature.

ON a *careless Inspection*, you perceive no Accuracy or Uniformity in the Position of the heavenly Bodies. They appear like an *illustrious Chaos*, a promiscuous Heap of shining Globes; neither ranked in Order, nor moving by Line. —But, what *seems* Confusion, is all Regularity. What carries a *Shew* of Negligence, is really the Result of the most *masterly Contrivance*. You think, perhaps, they rove in their aerial Flight; but they rove by the nicest Rule, and without the least Error. Their Circuits, though seemingly *devious*; their Mazes, though intricate to our Apprehensions *; are marked out, not in-

K 4

deed

* ——— Mazes intricate,

Eccentric, intervov'd, yet regular

Then most, when most irregular they seem.

MILT.

deed with *golden Compasses*, but by the infinitely more *exact Determinations* of the all-wise Spirit.

So, what wears the *Appearance* of *Calamity*, in the Allotments appointed for the Godly, has really the *Nature* of a *Blessing*. It issues from fatherly Love, and will terminate in the richest Good. If *Joseph* is snatched from the Embraces of an indulgent Parent, and abandoned to Slavery in a foreign Land; it is in order to save the holy Family from perishing by Famine, and to preserve “the Seed in whom all the Nations” of the Earth should be blessed.” If he falls into the deepest Disgrace, it is on purpose that he may rise to the highest Honours. Even the *Confinement* of the *Prison*, by the unsearchable Workings of Providence, *opens* his Way to the Right-hand of the *Throne* itself.—Let the most afflicted Servant of JESUS wait the final Upshot of Things; and he will *then* discover the apparent Expediency of all those Tribulations, which *now*, perhaps, he can hardly admit without Reluctance, or suffer without some Struggles of Dissatisfaction. Then, the gushing *Tear*, and the heaving *Sigh*, will be turned into *Tides* of *Gratitude*, and *Hymns* of holy *Wonder*.

IN the mean time, let no audacious Railer tax the Divine Procedure; but, *adoring* where we cannot *comprehend*, let us expect the *Evolution*

tion of the mysterious Plan. Then, shall every Eye perceive, that the seeming *Labyrinths* of Providence, were the most *direct* and *compendious* Way to effect his general Purposes of Grace, and to bring about each one's particular Happiness.—Then, also, shall it be clearly shewn, in the Presence of *applauding* Worlds, why Virtue *pined* in *Want*, while Vice *rioted* in *Affluence*: Why amiable Innocence so often, *dragged* the *Dungeon Chain*, while horrid Guilt *trailed* the *Robe* of State.—That Day of universal Audit, that Day of everlasting Retribution, will not only *vindicate*, but *magnify*, the whole Management of Heaven. The august Sessions shall close with this unanimous, this glorious Acknowledgement: “ Though *Clouds* and “ *Darkness*, impenetrable by any human Scrutiny, were sometimes round about the supreme Conductor of Things; yet *Righteousness* and “ *Judgment* were the constant *Habitation* of his “ *Seat*; the invariable Standard of all his Administrations.” — While we view (if I may illustrate the *grandest* Truths, by *inferior* Occurrences) while we view the *Arras* on the Side of *least Distinction*, it is void of any elegant Fancy; without any nice Strokes of Art; nothing but a confused Jumble of incoherent Threads. No sooner is the Piece beheld in its
proper

50 CONTEMPLATIONS

proper Aspect, but the suspected Rudeness vanishes, and the most curious Arrangement takes Place; we are charmed with Designs of the finest Taste, and Figures of the most graceful Forms; all is shaped with Symmetry; all is clad in Beauty.

THE Goodness of GOD is most eminently displayed in the Skies.—Could we take an understanding Survey of whatever is formed by the Divine Architect, throughout the whole Extent of *material Things*; our *Minds* would be charmed with their matchless Excellencies, and our *Tongues* echo back that great Encomium, they are “very very good.” Most *beautiful* * in themselves, contrived by unerring Wisdom, and executed with inimitable Skill; Most *useful* * in

* * This καλοκταβια of the Universe, and all its Parts, has been very highly, and very justly, extolled, by the antient Inquirers into Nature. And was, indeed, an illustrious Scene, spread before the Sages of the Heathen World, wherein to contemplate the Goodness, and the Glories, of the supreme Being.—It was nobly said, by a Pagan Philosopher, on this Occasion, Εἰς ἐρῶτα μεταβληθῆναι τὸν Θεὸν μελλόντα δημιουργεῖν. That GOD, when He undertook the Work of Creation, transformed Himself into Love.—But He need not transform Himself into this amiable

on the STARRY HEAVENS. 51

in their Functions, exactly fitting the Places they fill, and completely answering the Purposes for which they were intended.—All the Parts of the inanimate Creation proclaim, both by their intrinsic and relative Excellencies, the all-diffusive Beneficence of their Maker.

How much more wonderful are the Displays of Divine Indulgence, in the Worlds of *Life*! Because *dead Matter* is incapable of *Delight*; therefore the gracious Creator has raised innumerable Ranks of *perceptive Existence*: Such as are qualified to taste his Bounty, and enjoy each a *Happiness* suited to its peculiar State. With this View, He furnished the Regions of Nature with a most numerous Series of sensitive Beings. The *Waters* teem with Shoals of finny Inhabitants. The *dry Land* swarms with Animals of every Order. The Dwellings of the *Firmament* are occupied by Multitudes of winged People. Not so much as a *green Leaf*, Philosophers say, but lodges and accommodates its puny animalcule Tenants *.—And wherefore this Diversity, this Profusion

amiable Principle, for “*God is Love* :” As was much more loftily said by one, whom that *Philosopher* would have termed a *Barbarian*. 1 *John* iv. 8.

* A very celebrated Poet, in a beautiful Paragraph on this Subject, informs his Readers, That all Nature

Profusion of living Creatures, flying the Air, treading the Ground, and gliding through the Paths of the Sea? For this noble Reason,—That the great Sovereign may exercise his superabundant Goodness; that his *Table* may be furnished with Millions and Millions of *Guests*; that He may fill, every Hour, every Moment, their *Mouths*

ture swarms with Life. In subterranean *Cells*, the Earth heaves with vital Motion. The *Stone*, in its winding Citadel, holds Multitudes of animated Inhabitants. The *Pulp* of mellow *Fruit*, and all the Productions of the Orchard, feed the invisible Nations. Each *Liquid*, whether of acid Taste, or milder Relish, abounds with various Forms of sensitive Existence. Nor is the pure *Stream*, or transparent *Air*, without their Colonies of unseen People.—In which Constitution of Things, we have a wonderful Instance, not only of the Divine Goodness to those minute Beings, in *giving* them a *Capacity* for animal Gratifications; but of his tender Care for Mankind, in *making* them *imperceptible* to our Senses.

— These, conceal'd

By the kind Art of forming Heav'n, escape
The grosser Eye of Man: For, if the Worlds
In Worlds inclos'd should on his Senses burst,
From *Eates* ambrosial, and the nectar'd Bowl,
He'd turn abhorrent; and, in dead of Night,
When Silence sleeps o'er all, be stunn'd with Noise.

Thomson's Summer.

Mouths with Food, or their Hearts with Gladness.

BUT what a *small Theatre* are Three or *Four Elements* for the Operations of JEHOVAH's Bounty? His magnificent Liberality scorns such scanty Limits. If you ask, Wherefore has He created *all Worlds*, and replenished them with an unknown *Multiplicity* of *Beings*; rising one above another in an endless Gradation of still richer Endowments, and still nobler Capacities? The Answer is, — For the Manifestation of his own Glory, and especially for the *Communication* of his inexhaustible *Beneficence* *. — The great Creator could propose no Advantage to Himself. His *Bliss* is *incapable* of any *Addition*. “Be-
“ fore the Mountains were brought forth, or
“ ever the Earth and the World were made,”

He

* A *sacred Writer*, considering this pleasing Subject; and confining his Observation within the *narrow Limits* of his own Country; cries out, with a Mixture of Amazement and Gratitude, *How great is his Goodness, and how great is his Beauty!* — Who then can forbear being lost in Wonder, and transported with Delight, when he extends his Survey to those infinitely more *copious Communications* of Divine Bounty; which, like salutary and refreshing Streams, run through all Worlds; and make, not only the *little Vallies* of a single Kingdom, but the *Immensify* of Creation, *laugh and sing?* Zech. ix. 17.

He was supremely happy in his own adorable and all-sufficient Self. His grand Design therefore, in erecting so many stately Fabrics, and peopling them with so many Tribes of Inhabitants, was, To *transfuse* his exuberant *Kindness*, and impart *Felicity* in all its Forms. Ten thousand Worlds, stocked with Ten thousand times Ten thousand Ranks of sensitive and intelligent Existence, are so many *spacious Gardens*, which, with *Rivers* of communicated *Joy*, this ever-flowing Fountain waters continually.

BOUNDLESS Munificence! How *inexpressibly amiable* is the blessed G O D, considered in this charming Light? Is it possible to conceive any Excellence, so adorable and lovely, as infinite Benevolence, guided by unerring Wisdom, and exerting Almighty Power, on purpose to make a whole Universe happy? — O my Soul, what an *irresistible Attractive* is here! What a most worthy Object for thy most fervent Affection! Shall now every *glittering Toy* become a *Rival* to this transcendently beneficent Being, and *rob* Him of thy *Heart*? O! no. Let his creating Arm teach thee, to *trust* in the Fulness of his Sufficiency; let his all-superintending Eye incline thee, to *submit* to his Decrees; and let his Bounty, so freely vouchsafed, so amply diffused, win thee to *love* Him, with all the united Affections

fections of Gratitude, Delight, and Admiration.

BUT if the Goodness of GOD is so admirably seen in the Works of Nature, and the Favours of Providence; with what a noble Superiority does it *even triumph* in the *Mystery of Redemption*? Redemption is the brightest Mirror, in which to contemplate this most lovely Attribute of the Deity. Other Gifts are only as *Mites* from the Divine Treasury; but Redemption opens, I had almost said exhausts, *all the Stores* of his glorious Grace. Herein “GOD *commendeth* his Love *;” not only manifests, but renders it perfectly marvellous; manifests it in so stupendous a Manner, that it is beyond Parallel, beyond Thought, and “above all Blessing and Praise.”—Was HE not thy Son, everlasting GOD, thy *only* Son; the Son of thy Bosom from eternal Ages; the highest *Object* of thy complacential *Delight*? Was not thy Love to this adorable Son incomparably greater than the *tenderest* Affection of *Any*, or the *united* Affections of *All*, mortal Parents? Was not the blessed JESUS more illustrious in Excellency, than all Angels; more exalted in Dignity, than all Heavens? And yet didst thou resign HIM for poor *Mortals*, for vile

vile Sinners? Couldst thou see Him descend from his *Royal Throne*, and take up his Abode in the *sordid Stable*? See Him forego the *Homage* of the *Seraphim*, and stand exposed to the reproachful *Indignities* of an insolent *Rabble*? See Him arraigned at the Bar, and sentenced to Death; numbered with Malefactors, and nailed to the Gibbet; bathed in his own innocent Blood; and pouring out his Soul in Agonies of Sorrow?—Could the Father, the Father *himself*, with unknown Philanthropy, say; “It must, it shall, be so. My Pity to rebellious Man pleads and prevails. Awake, therefore, O *Sword* *, edged with Divine Wrath. Awake; and be sheathed in that *immaculate Breast*; pierce that *dearly-beloved Heart*. I am content, that my Son endure the Sharpness of Death, rather than *sinful Mortals* perish for ever.”—Incomprehensible Love! May it henceforward be the favourite *Subject* of my *Meditation*; more delightful to my musing Mind, than Applause to the ambitious Ear. May it be the darling *Theme* of my *Discourse*; sweeter to my Tongue, than the Droppings of the Honeycomb to my Taste. May it be my choicest *Comfort* through all the Changes of *Life*, and my reviving *Cordial* even in the last *Extremities* of *Dissolution* itself.

A PRO-

• Zech. xiii. 7.

A PROPHE^T, contemplating, with a distant Survey, this unexampled Instance of Almighty Love, is wrapt into a *Transport of Delight*. At a Loss for proper Acknowledgements, he calls upon the whole Universe to aid his labouring Breast, and supply his Lack of Praise. *Sing melodiously, ye vaulted Heavens; exult, and even leap for Gladness, thou cumberous Earth; ye Mountains, break your long Silence, and burst into Peals of loudest Acclamation* *; for the LORD, by this precious Gift, and this great Salvation, hath comforted his People.—A sacred Historian has left it upon Record, that, at the first Exhibition of this ravishing Scene, there was with the

* *Isa. xlix. 13.*—I have not adhered to our common Translation, but endeavoured to preserve somewhat more faithfully, the noble *Pathos*, and inimitable *Energy*, of the sacred Original.—The Love of GOD manifested in a Divine and dying Saviour, is a Blessing of such *inconceivable Richness*, as must render all Acknowledgements *flat*, and all Encomiums *languid*. Yet, I think, the most poetical and most *emphatical Celebration* of that unspeakable Instance of Goodness, is contained in this rapturous Exclamation of the Prophet. Which intimates, with a wonderful Majesty of Sentiment, that even the whole Compass of the *inanimate Creation*, could it be *sensible* of the Benefit, and capable of *Delight*, would express its *Gratitude* in all these Demonstrations of the most lively and exuberant joy.

Angel, who brought the blessed Tidings, a Multitude of the heavenly Host; praising God, and making the Concave of the Skies resound with their Hallelujahs. At the Dawn of the Sun of Righteousness, when He was beginning to rise with Healing in his Wings, the *Morning Stars* sang together, and all the *Sons of GOD* shouted for Joy.—And shall *Man*, whom this gracious Dispensation principally respects; shall *Man*, who is the Centre of all these gladdening Rays; shall He have no *Heart* to adore, no *Anthem* to celebrate, This

Love without End, and without Measure Grace?

M I L T.

How *clear* is the Face of the Sky, and how perfectly *pure*! Clearer than the *limpid Stream*, more pure than the *polished Crystal*. That *stately Ceiling*, fretted with Gold, and stretched to an Extent of many Millions of Leagues, is not disfigured with a *single Flaw*. That *azure Mantle*, embroidered with Stars, and spacious enough to form a Covering for unnumbered Worlds, is without the least *Spot* or *Wrinkle*.—Yet this can scarce yield us so much as a faint Representation of the *Divine Purity*. GOD is a GOD of the most immaculate Excellence. His *Ways* are

I

Uprightness

Uprightness itself; his Counsels and Words, the very Sanctity of Wisdom and Truth. The *Laws*, which He has given to *universal Nature*, are exquisitely contrived, and beyond all Possibility of Improvement. The *Precepts*, which He has appointed for the *human Race*, are a complete Summary of all that is honourable in itself, and perfective of the rational Mind.—Not the least *Overfight*, in planning a Series of Events for all Futurity; nor the least *Mal-administration*, in managing the Affairs of every *Age*, since Time began; of every *Nation*, under the whole Heaven.—Pardon these disparaging Expressions. A *negative Perfection* is far, far beneath thy Dignity, *O Thou most Highest* *. In all

* *O Thou most Highest*.—This Expression occurs more than once, in the Psalms used by the Established Church. And is, I think, one of those *Beauties*, which, because often exhibited, generally escapes our Notice. It is a *Superlative* formed on a *Superlative*; and, though not strictly conformable to *grammatical Rules*, is nobly superior to them all.—The *Language* seems to be sensible of its own *Deficiency*, when the incomprehensible J E H O V A H is addressed, or celebrated. Oppressed, as it were, with the Glories of the Subject, it labours after a *more emphatical* Manner of Diction, than the *ordinary Forms* of Speech afford.—It is, if I rightly judge, one of those daring and happy Peculiarities of a masterly Genius

all these Instances; in all thy Acts, and all thy Attributes; Thou art not only *holy*, but “*glorious in Holiness.*”

So inconceivably holy is the LORD GOD of Hosts, that He sees *Defilement* even in the *Brightness* of yonder Firmament. Those living Sapphires, before His Majesty, lose their Lustre. *He looketh even to the Moon, and it shineth not; yea, the Stars are not pure in his Sight. How much less Man, who, in his fallen and depraved State, is little better than a Worm, that crawls in the corrupted Carcase; and the Son of Man,*

who,

which Mr. Pope so finely describes; and, while he describes, exemplifies:

Great Wits sometimes may gloriously offend,
And rise to Faults true Critics dare not mend;
From vulgar Bounds with brave Disorder part,
And snatch a Grace beyond the Reach of Art.

Essay on Criticism.

St. Paul's — ελαχιστερον παντων των αγιων — is a beautiful Passage of the like Nature; which our Translators have very properly rendered, *Less than the least of all Saints.* — His — πολλω μαλλον κρεισσον — is another Instance of the same Kind. But here the *English* Version fails. *Far better* — is extremely *flaccid*, compared with the *nervous* Original. And I greatly question, whether it is possible to translate the Sentence with equal Conciseness, and equal Spirit. See *Eph.* iii. 8. *Phil.* i. 23.

who, by Reason of his manifold actual Impurities, is too justly compared to an *Insect*, that wallows amidst Stench and Putrefaction *?—
Is there not then abundant Cause, for the most

L 3 irre-

* *Job xxv. 5, 6.* I submit it to the Judgment of the Learned, Whether this is not the true Meaning of the Text.—It may not be able, perhaps, to recommend itself to the *squeamishly nice* Critic, or to those who are always extolling the *supposed Dignity* of the human Nature. But it seems, in Preference to every other Interpretation, *suitable* to the sacred Context; and is far, far from being *injurious* to the Character of that apostate Race, which is “altogether become abominable,” and “is as an unclean Thing.”—On this Supposition, there is not only an *apparent*, but a very *striking Contrast*, between the Purity of GOD, and the Pollution of Man: The Purity of GOD, which outshines the Moon, and eclipses the Stars; the Pollution of Man, which renders him as loathsome to the all-seeing Eye, as the vilest Vermin are in ours.—Without assigning this Sense to the Passage, I cannot discern the Force of the *Antithesis*, or indeed the *Propriety* of the *Sentiment*. *Worms*, in the general, give us an Idea of *Meanness* and *Infirmity*; not of *Defilement* and *Impurity*; unless they are *Insects* of such a particular Kind, and considered in such noisome Circumstances.—The Two Words of the Original — רמם and תולעה — are evidently used in this Signification by *Moses* and *Isaiab*; by the one, to denote the Vermin that devoured the *putrefied Manna*; by the other, to express the Reptiles, which swarm in the *Body* that sees *Corruption*. *Exod. xvi. 20.* *Isa. xiv. 11.*

irreproachable and eminent of Mankind, to renounce all *arrogant Pretensions*; to lay aside every assuming Air; to take nothing but *Shame* and *Confusion* to *themselves*? A holy Sufferer, and a holy Prophet, felt such humbling Impressions from a Glimpse of the uncreated Purity. “*I abhor myself in Dust and Ashes,*” was the Declaration of the one; “*I am a Man of unclean Lips,*” the Confession of the other.— And should not this teach us all to adore the Divine Mercies, for that precious *purifying Fountain*, which was foretold from the Foundations of the World, but was opened at that awful Juncture, when knotty *Whips* tore the Flesh; when ragged *Thorns* mangled the Temples; when sharpened *Nails* cut fresh Sluices for the crimson Current; when the Gash of the *Spear* completed the dreadful Work, and *forthwith flowed there*, from the wounded Heart, *Blood and Water*.

ESPECIALLY since the GOD, in whose Sight the *very Heavens* are *not unfulfilled*, though “*spread out like a molten Looking-glass,*” saw *no Blemish* in his *dear Son*. His all-penetrating and jealous Eye discerned nothing amiss, nothing defective, in our glorious Redeemer. Nothing amiss? Yea, He bore this most illustrious Testimony concerning his holy Child JESUS: “*In Him*

“ Him I am *pleased*; I am *well-pleased*; I acquiesce, with intire Complacency and the *highest Delight*, in his Person, his Undertaking, and the whole Execution of his Office.” — How should this Thought *enliven* our *Hopes*, while the other *mortifies* our *Pride*? Ought not our Hearts to spring within us, and even leap for Joy, from the repeated Assurances given us by Revelation, That such a divinely excellent Being is our Mediator? What Reason has every Believer to adopt the blessed Virgin’s Exclamation? “ *My Soul doth magnify the LORD* for this transcendent Mercy; and *my Spirit rejoices*, not in wide-extended Harvests waving over my fertile Glebe*; not in Armies vanquished, and leaving the peculiar Treasure of Nations for my Spoil*; but in an infinitely richer, nobler Blessing, even in *GOD my Saviour*.” — That a Person, so sublime and perfect, has vouchsafed to become my Surety; to give Himself for my *Ransom* in the World *below*, and act as my *Advocate* in the Royal Presence *above*; yea, to make my *Reco-*

L 4

very

* * The inspired Penman, from these Two Occasions of distinguished Joy, sets forth the incomparably greater *Delight*, which arises from the Gift of a Saviour, and the Blessing of Redemption. *Isa. vi. ver. 3.* compared with *ver. 9.*

64 CONTEMPLATIONS

very the Reward of *his Sufferings*, my final Felicity the Honour of his mediatorial Kingdom.

WHEN an innumerable Multitude * of Bodies, many of them more than a *Hundred thousand Miles* in Diameter †, are all set in *Motion*; — When the *Orbits*, in which they perform their periodical Revolutions, are extended at the Rate of some Hundreds of *Millions*; — when each has a *distinct* and separate *Sphere*, for finishing his vast Circuit; — when none knows what it is to be *cramped*, but most *freely expatiates* in his unbounded Career; — when every one is placed at such an *immense Remove* from each other, that they appear to their respective Inhabitants, only as so many *Spots of Light*; — Oh how astonishing must be the *Expanse*, which yields *Room* for all these mighty *Globes*, and their widely-

* This refers, not only to the Planets which pass and repass about our Sun, but also to the other Planetary Worlds, which are supposed to attend the several fixed Stars.

* The Diameter of *Jupiter* is calculated at 130,653 Miles, while his Orbit is reckoned to consist of 895,134,000. Which Computation, according to the Maxims of Astronomy, and the Laws of Proportion, may, as is taken for granted in the Contemplations, be applied to *other Planets* revolving round *other Suns*.

on the STARRY HEAVENS. 65

widely-diffused *Operations*? To what prodigious Lengths did the Almighty Builder stretch his Line, when He marked out this stupendous Platform? — I wonder at such an immeasurable Extent. My very Thoughts are lost in this *Abyss* of Space. But, be it known to Mortals, be it never forgot by Sinners, that, in all its most *surprising Amplitude*, it is *small*, it is *scanty*, compared with the Bounty and the Mercy of its Maker.

HIS *Bounty* is absolutely without Limits*, and without End. The most lavish Generosity cannot *exhaust*, or even *diminish*, his Munificence. O! all ye Tribes of Men, or rather, all ye Classes of intelligent Creatures, ye are not straitned in the *Liberality* of your ever-blessed Creator, be not straitned in your own *Expectations*.

* By *Bounty*, I mean, not the actual *Exercise*, or the *Effects* of this Excellency in the Deity. These *are*, and always *must be*, through the immense Perfection of the Attribute, and the necessary Scantiness of the Recipient, bounded. But I would be understood, as speaking of the Divine *Power*, and the Divine *Will*, to exert Divine Beneficence. These can have no real, no imaginable Limits. These, after a Communication of Blessings, distributed to unnumbered Worlds, continued through unnumbered Ages, must *still* have more to bestow; for *ever* have more to bestow; *infinitely* more to bestow, than it is possible for Creation itself to receive.

tions. "Open your Mouth wide, and He shall
 "fill it with copious and continual Draughts
 "from the Cup of Joy." Your *GOD*, on
 whom is your whole Dependence, is more than
 able to "supply all your Need, according to his
 "Riches in Glory."—When the *LORD* of All
 is the Giver, and his Grace * the Gift, let your
 Wishes be unbounded, and your Cravings in-
 satiable. *All* that created Beings can possibly
covet, is but a very small *Pittance* of that un-
 known Happiness, which the everlasting Bene-
 factor is ready to *bestow*. Form not your Esti-
 mate of the *supreme Beneficence* from those nar-
 row Models of *mortal Kindness*, which either
 your own Experience has observed, or the His-
 tory of Ages has recorded. Suppose every cha-
 ritable Disposition, which warms the Hearts of
 the human Race, added to those more enlarged
 Affections, which glow in heavenly Bosoms;
 what were they *all*, even in their highest Exer-
 cise,

*2 Cor. ix. 8. GOD is able to make all Grace
 abound towards you, that ye having all Sufficiency in
 all Things, may abound to every good Work.* —

How beautiful and emphatical is this Description!
 inferior to nothing but that Extent of Ability, and
 those Riches of Liberality, which it so eloquently
 celebrates. Does it not *exhaust* all the Powers of
 Language, while it attempts to give us a *Specimen* of
 the *Munificence* of the *LORD*?

on the STARRY HEAVENS. 67

cise, compared with the *Benignity* of the Divine Nature? — Bless *me* then, Thou eternal Source of Love, bless *all* that reverence thy holy Name, according to thy own most profuse Goodness; whose *great Prerogative* it is, to *disdain* all *Measure*. O! bless us, in proportion to that Grace, the Richness of which, *unutterable* by the Tongues of Men and of Angels, was once *spoke* in the *Groans*, and *written* in the *Wounds*, of thy expiring Son.

AND as for the *Mercy* of God, it is *greater* “than the *Heavens*,” more extensive than the Dimensions of the Sky. Charming Thought, transporting Reflection! let me indulge Thee once more *. Let me think over the noble Displays of this lovely Attribute; and, while I admire the *Trophies* of *forgiving Goodness*, add one to the Number. — With what amiable and affecting Colours is this represented in the *Parable* of the *Prodigal*? What could induce that foolish Youth to forsake his gracious Father? Had he not been tenderly cherished by the good Parent, and loaded with Benefits from his indulgent Hand? Were not the *Restraints* of parental Government an *easy Yoke*, or rather a *Preserva-*

tive
* This refers to Page 10. of *Reflections on a Flower-Garden*.

ive from Ruin? Notwithstanding every endearing Obligation, he revolts from his Duty, and launches out into such scandalous Irregularities, as were a Dishonour to his Family, and destructive to himself.—But, when Afflictions brought him to a Sense of his Folly, and sharp Necessity drove him to a submissive Return, did the *injured Father* discover the least *Resentment* of Mind? Quite the Reverse. He *espied him*, while he was yet a *great Way off*; and the Moment he beheld the profligate Creature, “his Bowels sounded like an Harp,” touch’d with Notes divinely soft. He never once thinks of the riotous Living, and infamous Course of Debaucheries. Pity, parental Pity, passes an Act of Oblivion, and, in one Instant, cancels a Series of long-continued Provocations.—So strong are the Yearnings of fatherly Affection, that he even *runs* to receive the naked and destitute Wretch to his Arms. And is there a single Frown in his Brow, or one upbraiding Word on his Tongue? — Instead of *reproaching* him for his odious Excesses, he *falls* on his Neck, and snatches him to his eager Embraces. Instead of rejecting him with Indignation, for his undutiful Extravagance, he kisses him with Tears of Delight; and rejoices at his Return from Folly, as he formerly rejoiced on the Day of his Nativity.

—When

—When this Companion of Harlots opens his Mouth, *before he speaks, the Father hears.* He interrupts him in the midst of his intended Speech. The Overflowings of his compassionate Heart can brook no Delay. He seems to be *uneasy himself*, till he has made the afflicted *Penitent glad*, with the Assurance of his Acceptance, and the choicest of his Favours.—While the poor abashed Offender seeks nothing more than not to be abhorred, he is thoroughly reconciled. While he requests no other Indulgence, than only to be treated as the *meanest Servant*, he is caressed and honoured as the *dearest of Children*.—Was there ever so bright and winning a Picture, of the tenderest Mercy, most freely vouchsafed, to the most unworthy of Creatures? Yet thus, my Soul; and thus, my Fellow-sinner; will the LORD GOD of everlasting Compassions receive us, if, with a contrite Spirit, and lively Faith, we turn to him through JESUS CHRIST.

WHERE Sin has abounded, says the Proclamation from the Court of Heaven, *Grace doth much more abound.*—By this *Manasseh*, a Monster of Barbarity, and an Adept in Iniquity, becomes a Child of forgiving Love, and an Heir of immortal Glory.—Behold that bitter and bloody Persecutor *Saul*, when, breathing out Threatnings,

70 CONTEMPLATIONS

Threatnings *, and bent upon Slaughter, he worried the Lambs, and put to Death the Disciples of the blessed JESUS. Who, upon the Principles of human Judgment, would not have pronounced him a Vessel of Wrath, destined to unavoidable Damnation? Nay, would not have been ready to conclude, that, if there were heavier

* *Acts ix. 1. ΣΑΥΛΟΣ ΕΤΙ ΕΜΠΝΕΩΝ ΑΠΕΙΛΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΦΟΒΟΣ. Saul yet breathing out Threatning and Slaughter.*

—What a Representation is here of a *Mind, mad with Rage*, and abandoned to the fiercest Extremes of Barbarity! I scarce know, whether I am more *shocked* at the Persecutor's *savage Disposition*, or *charmed* with the Evangelist's *lively Description*. —

The Adverb — *ΕΤΙ* — seems to refer to *Chap. viii. ver. 3.* and has, in this Connection, a peculiar Force. The Havock he had committed, the inoffensive Families he had *already* ruined, were not sufficient to assuage his vengeful Spirit. They were only a *Taste*; which instead of *glutting* the Blood-hound, made him more closely pursue the Track, and more *eagerly pant* for Destruction. — He is *still* athirst for Violence and Murder. So restless and insatiable is his Thirst, that he even *breathes out* Threatning and Slaughter. His Words are Spears and Arrows, and his Tongue a sharp Sword. 'Tis as natural for him to *menace* the Christians, as to breathe the Air. —

Nay, they *bleed*, every Hour, every Moment in the Purposes of his rancorous Heart. It is only owing to Want of Power, that every Syllable he utters, every Breath he draws, does not deal about Deaths, and cause some of the innocent Disciples to fall.

heavier Chains, and a deeper Dungeon in the World of Woe, they must surely be reserved for such an implacable Enemy of true Godliness. Yet (admire and adore the Riches of Almighty Grace!) this *Saul* is elected into the goodly Fellowship of the Prophets; is numbered with the noble Army of Martyrs; and makes a distinguished Figure among the glorious Company of the Apostles. — The *Corinthians* were flagitious even to a Proverb. Some of them wallowed in such abominable Vices, and habituated themselves to such outrageous Acts of Injustice, as were a Reproach to human Nature. Yet even these Sons of Violence, and Slaves of Sensuality, “were washed, were sanctified, were justified *.” Washed in the precious Blood of a dying Redeemer; sanctified by the powerful Operations of the blessed Spirit; justified through the infinitely tender Mercies of a gracious GOD. And Those, that were once the Burden of the Earth, are now the Joy of Heaven, and the Delight of Angels.

THERE is another Instance in Scripture, which most loudly publishes that sweetest of the Divine Names, “The LORD, the LORD GOD, “merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and “abundant in Goodness and Truth; keeping “Mercy

* 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 11.

“ Mercy for Thousands, forgiving Iniquity,
 “ Transgression, and Sin.” An Instance this,
 which exceeds all the former ; which exceeds
 whatever can be imagined ; which if I was to
 forget, the very Stones might cry out, and sound
 it in my Ears. I mean the Case of those Sin-
 ners, who murdered the Prince of Peace, and
 LORD of Glory. These Men could scarce have
 the Shadow of an Excuse for their Crime ; hardly
 a Circumstance to extenuate their Guilt. They
 were well acquainted with his exemplary Con-
 versation ; they had often heard his heavenly
 Doctrines ; they were almost daily Spectators of
 his unequalled Miracles. They therefore had
 all possible Reason to honour Him, as the most
 illustrious of Beings ; and to receive Him into
 their Houses, their Arms, their very Hearts, as
 the most inestimable of Blessings. Yet, not-
 withstanding all these engaging Motives to love
 Him, even above their own Lives, they seize his
 Person ; asperse his Character ; drag Him before
 a heathen Tribunal ; and extort a Sentence of
 Death, against Innocence and Holiness itself.
 Never was the vilest Slave so contumeliously
 abused, nor the most execrable Malefactor so
 barbarously executed. The Sun was confounded
 at the shocking Scene ; and one cannot but won-
 der, how the avenging Lightenings could with-
 hold

hold their Flashes. The Earth trembled at the horrid Deed; and why, why did it not cleave asunder, and open a Passage for such Blood-thirsty Miscreants into the nethermost Hell? Shall These ever hope to obtain Forgiveness from the righteous Judge? Shall not These be consigned over to inexorable Wrath, and the severest Torments?—O the miraculous Effects of Divine Grace! O the triumphant Goodness of G O D our Saviour! Even these impious Wretches, at the Descent of the Holy Ghost, were convinced of their enormous Sin; were wounded with penitential Remorse; fled to the Sanctuary of the Cross, and laid hold on the Horns of that Altar; had their Pardon ratified by the baptismal Seal; and, continuing in the Apostles Doctrine, were made Partakers of the Kingdom of Heaven: Where they now shine, as so many everlasting Monuments of most distinguished Mercy; and receive Beatitude past Utterance, from that very Redeemer, whom once “with wicked Hands “they crucified and slew.”——Well might the Prophet cry out, with a pleasing Amazement; “Who is a G O D like unto Thee, that pardoneth Iniquity, and passeth by Transgression *?”——Let all Flesh remember, let all

* Mic. vii. 18.

Flesh rejoice, That with the LORD there is
such Mercy, and with his CHRIST *such plenteous Redemption* *.

WHAT a grand and majestic *Dome* is the Sky! And where are the *Pillars*, that support the stately Concave? What Art, most exactly true, *balanced* the Pressure; and what Props, of insuperable Strength, *sustain* the Weight? How is that immeasurable Arch *upheld*, unshaken, and unimpaired; while so many Generations of busy Mortals have *sunk* and disappeared, as Bubbles upon the Stream? — If those Stars are of such an amazing Bulk, how are they also *fastened* in their lofty Situation? By what Miracle in Mechanics, are so many Thousands of ponderous Orbs kept from falling upon our Heads; and
 dashing

* It is needless, I hope, to offer an Apology for dwelling so long upon this delightful Theme. Who can complain of *Tediousness*, while I speak *Consolation* to distressed, and *Recovery* to ruined Creatures? The Divine Mercy is the sole Fountain of all our present and future Blessings. In proportion to this benign Attribute, human Hopes arise, and human Felicity flows. Who therefore can be weary of *viewing* and *reviewing*; when the *Lengths* and *Breadths* of forgiving Grace are the ravishing Prospect? — Methinks, on such a Subject, I might have expatiated, without Fear of creating Disgust, till the *Lark* listened to the joyful Tidings.

dashing both the World to Pieces, and its Inhabitants to Death? Are they hung in golden or *adamantine Chains*? Rest they their enormous Load on *Rocks of Marble*, or *Columns of Brass*? No; they are *pendulous* in fluid *Æther*, and yet more immoveably *fixed*, than if the everlasting Mountains lent their Ridges for a Basis. The Almighty Architect *stretches out the North*, and all its starry Train, *over the empty Place*. He *hangs the Earth*, and the ethereal Globes, *upon nothing* *. Yet are their Foundations laid so sure, that they can “never be moved at any time.”

THUS it is with regard to the *final Perseverance* of the *sincere* Christian.—His Nature is all enfeebled. He is not able of himself to think a good Thought. He has no *visible Safeguard*, nor any *Sufficiency* of his *own*. And yet whole Legions of formidable Enemies are combined to compass his Ruin. The *World* lays unnumbered Snares for his Feet; the *Devil* is incessantly urging the Siege, by a Multitude of fiery Darts, or wily Temptations; the *Flesh*, like a perfidious Inmate, under Colour of Friendship, and a specious Pretence of Pleasure, is always forward to betray his Integrity. — But, amidst all these threatening Circumstances, of personal Weakness, and imminent Danger, an *invisible Aid* is his

M 2
Defence.

* Job xxvi. 7.

Defence. "*I will uphold thee*, says the blessed "*GOD, with the Right-hand of my Righteousness* *." O comfortable Truth! The Arm, which fixes the Stars in their Orders, and guides the Planets in their Course, is stretched out to preserve the Heirs of Salvation. — "*My Sheep*, " adds the great Redeemer, *are mine, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my Hand* †." What Words are these! And did they come from HIM, who hath all Power in Heaven, and on Earth? And were they spoke to every unfeigned, though feeble Follower of the Lamb? Then, *Omnipotence* itself must be *vanquished*, before they can be *destroyed*, either by the Seduction of *Fraud*, or the Assaults of *Violence*.

IF you ask therefore, *What Security* we have of enduring to the End, and continuing faithful unto Death?—The very *same* that establishes the Heavens, and settles the Ordinances of the Universe. Can *these* be thrown into Confusion? Then may *the true Believer* draw back unto Perdition? Can the Sun be dislodged from his Sphere, and rush lawlessly through the Sky? Then, and then only, can the Faith of GOD's Elect § be finally overthrown.—Be of good Cou-
rage

* Isai. xli. 10.

† John x. 28.

§ Tit. i. 1.

rage then, my Soul; rely on those Divine *Succours*, which are so *solemnly stipulated*, so *faithfully promised*. Though thy *Grace* be languid as the glimmering *Spark*; though the *Overflowings* of *Corruption* threaten it with total Extinction; yet, since the great J E H O V A H has undertaken to cherish the dim Principle, “many Waters cannot quench it, nor all Floods drown it.” Nay, though it were feeble as the *smoking Flax**, Al-

M 3

mighty

* The Tendernefs and Faithfulness of God to his People is finely pictured by the Prophet *Isaiah*, Chap. xlii. ver. 3. Which Passage, because of its rich Consolation, and uncommon Beauty, is deservedly adopted by St. *Matthew*, and ingrafted into the System of evangelical Truths. — *He will not himself break, nor suffer to be broken by any other, the bruised Reed; nor quench the smoking Flax.* Was it possible to have chosen two more delicate and expressive Representations? Could any Image be more significant of a very infirm and enfeebled *Faith*, than the flexile *Reed*, that bends before every Wind; and, besides its natural Weakness, is made abundantly weaker by being bruised, and so ready to fall in pieces of itself? — And nothing, sure, could more pathetically describe the extreme Imbecility of that other Principle of the Divine Life *Love*, than the State of the *Flax*, which is but just beginning to flame, and consequently liable to be put out by the least Blast; or rather of the *Wick* of the Lamp, when it is not kindled into so much as a glimmering Fire, but only breathing Smoke, and uncertain whether it shall be kindled or no. *Matt. xii. 20.*

mighty Goodness stands engaged to augment the Heat, to raise the Fire, and feed the Flame, till it beam forth a *Lamp* of immortal *Glory* in the Heavens.

THE *Faithfulness* of GOD may be emblematically seen, in the *Stability* of the heavenly *Bodies*, and the *Perpetuity* of their *Motions**. — Those that are *fixed*, continue unalterably in their Stations. No injurious Shocks, no Violence of conflicting Elements, are able to displace those *everlasting Hinges*, on which dependent Worlds revolve. Through the whole Flight of Time, they recede not, so much as a Hair's Breadth, from the precise central Point of their respective Systems. — While the *Erratic* perform their prodigious Stages, without any Intermission, or the least Embarrassment. How soon, and how easily, is the most finished Piece of *human Machinery* disconcerted? But all the *celestial Movements* are so nicely adjusted; all their Operations so critically proportioned; and their mutual Dependencies so strongly connected; that they prolong their beneficial Courses, throughout all Ages. While *mighty Cities* are overwhelmed with Ruin, and their very Names lost in Oblivion: While *vast Empires* are swept from their Foundations,
and

* Psal. cxix. 89, 90.

and leave not so much as a shadowy Trace of their antient Magnificence : While *all terrestrial Things* are subject to Vicissitude, and fluctuating in Uncertainty : *These* are permanent in their Duration ; invariable in their Functions ; “ not “ one faileth.” — Who doubts the *constant Succession* of Day and Night ; or the *regular Returns* of Summer and Winter ? And why, O ! why should we doubt the *Veracity* of God, or distrust the *Accomplishment* of his holy *Word* ? Can the Ordinances of Heaven depart ? Then only can God forget to be gracious ; or neglect the Performance of his Promise. — Nay, our LORD gives us yet *firmer Ground* of Affiance. He affords us a surer Bottom for our *Faith*, than the *fundamental Laws* of the Universe. “ Heaven “ and Earth, He says, may pass away ; but his “ Word will abide for ever :” His sacred Word will be fulfilled to the very uttermost.

O *powerful Word* ! How astonishing is its Efficacy ? When this Word was issued forth, a *thousand Worlds* emerged out of nothing. And should the mighty Orders be repeated, a *thousand more* would spring into Existence. By this Word, the vast System of created Things is *upheld*, in immutable *Constancy* ; but should it give Command, or cease to exert its Energy, the universal Frame would be dissolved, and all Na-

ture *revert* to her original *Chaos*. And this very Word is *pledged* for the Safety, the Comfort, the Happiness of *the Godly*. This inviolable, this Almighty Word *speaks* in *all* the *Promises* of the Gospel. — How *strangely infatuated* are our Souls, that we should value it so little! What *Infidels* are we *in fact*, that we should depend upon it no more! Did it *create* whatever has a Being, and shall it not *work* Faith in our Breasts? Do unnumbered Worlds owe their *Support* to this Word, and shall it not be sufficient to *buoy* up our Souls in Troubles, or *establish* them in Trials? Is it the *Life* of the Universe, and shall it be a *dead Letter* to Mankind?

IF I wish to be heard, when I implore heavenly Blessings; is not *this Privilege* most clearly *made over* to my Enjoyment, in that well known Text, “Ask, and it shall be given you *?” — If I long for the eternal Comforter, to dwell in my Heart, and sanctify my Nature; have I not an *apparent Title* to this *high Prerogative*, conferred in that sweet assertive Interrogation, “How much
“more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy
“Spirit to those that ask Him †?” — If I earnestly covet the ineffimable Treasures, that are comprised in the great IMMANUEL’s Mediation; can I have a *firmer Claim* to the *noble Portion*, than

is

* Matt. vii. 7.

† Luke xi. 13.

on the STARRY HEAVENS. 85

is granted in that most precious Scripture, “Him
 “that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast
 “out*.” — *What Assurance*, of being inter-
 ested in these unspeakable Mercies, would I *de-*
fire? What *Form* of Conveyance, what *Deed* of
Settlement, were it left to my own Option,
 should I choose? Here is the *Word* of a *King*;
 the King immortal and invisible; all whose De-
 clarations are Truth itself. — If a Monarch
bestow Immunities on a Body of Men, and *con-*
firm them by an authentic *Charter*; no one con-
 troverts, no one questions, their Right to the
 Royal Favours. And why should we suspect
 the *Validity* of those glorious *Grants*, which are
 made by the everlasting Sovereign of Nature;
 which He has also *ratified* by an Oath, and *sealed*
 with the Blood of his Son? — Corporations may
 be disfranchised, and Charters revoked. Even
 Mountains may be removed, and Stars drop from
 their Spheres: But a *Tenure*, founded on the Di-
 vine Promise, is unalienably *secure*, is *lasting* as
 Eternity *itself*.

WE have endeavoured to spell out a *Syllable*
 of the eternal *Name*, in the Wonders of the Sky.
 We have caught a *Glimpse* of the Almighty's
Glory, from the Lustre of innumerable Stars.

But

* John vi. 37.

But would we behold all his Excellencies portrayed in *full Perfection*, and drawn to the *very Life*, let us attentively consider the *Redeemer*.— I observe, there are some Parts of the Firmament, in which the *Stars* seem, as it were, to *cluster*. They are sown thicker, they lie closer, and strike the Eye with redoubled Splendor. Like the Jewels on a Crown, they mingle their Beams, and reflect a reciprocal Increase of Brilliancy on each other. — And is there not such an Assemblage, such a *Constellation* of the *Divine Honours*, most amiably effulgent in the blessed JESUS?

DOES not *infinite Wisdom* * shine with surpassing Brightness in CHRIST? To the *making* of a *World* there was no Obstacle; but to the *Saving* of *Man* there seemed to be unsurmountable Bars. If the Rebel is suffered to escape, where is the *inflexible Justice*, which denounces “Death as the Wages of Sin?” If the Offender is thoroughly pardoned, where is the *inviolable Veracity*, which has solemnly declared, “The Soul that sinneth, shall die?” These awful Attributes are set in terrible Array; and, like an impenetrable Battalion, oppose the Salvation of apostate Mankind. Who can suggest a *Method*, to *absolve* the traiterous Race, and yet *vindicate* the

* See the next Note.

on the STARRY HEAVENS. 83

the Honours of Almighty Sovereignty? This is an Intricacy, which the most exalted of finite Intelligencies are unable to clear.—But behold the *unsearchable Secret* revealed; revealed in the wonderful Redemption accomplished by a dying Saviour! So *plainly revealed*, that “He who runs may read;” and even *Babes* understand, what Minds of the deepest Penetration could not contrive.—The Son of GOD, taking our Nature, obeys the Law, and undergoes Death, in our stead. By this Means, the threatned *Curse* is executed in all its *Rigour*, and free *Grace* is exercised in all its *Riches*. Justice *maintains* its *Rights*, and, with a steady Hand, administers impartial Vengeance; while Mercy *dispenses* her *Pardons*, and welcomes the repentant Criminal into its tenderest Embraces. Hereby, the seemingly thwarting Attributes are reconciled; and the Sinner is saved, not only in *full Consistence* with the Honour of the supreme Perfections, but to the most *illustrious Manifestation* of them all.

WHERE does the *Divine Power* * so signally exert itself, as in the *Cross* of CHRIST, and in
the

* * CHRIST, the *Wisdom* of GOD, and the *Power* of GOD. 1 Cor. i. 24. — To the Intent that now unto the *Principalities* and *Powers* in heavenly Places, might be known by the Church (by the amazing *Contrivance*,

the *Conquests of Grace*? — Our LORD, in his lowest State of Humiliation, gained a more glorious Victory, than when, through the dividing Sea, and the waste howling Wilderness, He “rode upon his Chariots and Horses of Salvation.” When his Hands were *riveted* with Irons to the bloody Tree, He *disarmed* Death of its Sting, and *plucked* the Prey from the Jaws of Hell. Then, even then, while He was crucified in *Weakness*, He vanquished the *strong Man*, and subdued our most formidable Enemies: Even then He spoiled Principalities, triumphed over the Powers of Darkness, and led Captivity captive. — And now He is exalted to his heavenly Throne, with what a prevailing Efficacy does his Grace go forth, “conquering, and to conquer?” By this, the *Slaves of Sin* are rescued from their Bondage, and restored to the *Liberty of Righteousness*. By this, depraved Wretches, whose *Appetites* were *sensual*, and their *Dispositions* *devilish*, are not only renewed, but renewed after the Image of GOD, and made Partakers of a *Divine Nature*. Millions, Millions of lost Creatures are snatched, by the Interposition of Grace, like *Brands* from the Burning; and, translated

trivance, Circumstances, and Accomplishment of its Redemption) the deep, extensive and (πολυποικιλῶς) greatly diversified Wisdom of GOD. Eph. iii. 10.

translated into everlasting Mansions, shine *brighter* than the *Stars*, shine *bright* as the *Sun*, in the Kingdom of their Father.

WOULD you see a more complete Display of the Divine *Purity*, than the unspotted Firmament, the Spangles of Heaven, or the golden Fountain of Day? Contemplate the same sacred Being. He is the *Brightness* of his Father's *Glory*, and the *express Image* of his Person. In his immaculate Nature, in his heavenly Tempers, in his most holy Life, the *moral Perfections* of the *Deity* are represented to the highest Advantage*.—Hark! how *Mercy*, with her charming Voice, speaks in all He utters.—See! how *Benevolence* pours her choicest Stores, in all He does.—Did ever *Compassion* look so amiably soft, as in those pitying *Tears*, which swelled his Eyes, and trickled down his Cheeks, to bedew the *Rancour* of his inveterate Enemies?—Was it possible for *Patience* to assume a Form so lovely, as that sweetly-winning Conduct, which bore the *Contradiction* of *Sinners*; and *intreated* the *Obstinate*, to be reconciled; *besought* the *Guilty*, not to die?—In a Word; from other Things, we may collect some *scattered Rays* of J E H O-
V A H'S

* In this Sense, that Saying of our LORD is eminently true, *He that hath seen ME, hath seen the FATHER.* John xiv. 9.

86 CONTEMPLATIONS

VAH's Glory; but in CHRIST they are all *united*; and beam forth with the strongest Radiance, the most delightful Effulgence. *Out of Sion, and in Sion's great Redeemer, hath GOD appeared in perfect Beauty.*

SEARCH then, my Soul, above all other Pursuits, search the *Records of redeeming Love*. Let these be the *principal* Objects of thy Study. Here employ thyself with the most unwearied Affiduity.—*In these are hid all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge* *. Such Wisdom, as the very Angels are intensely desirous to become more intimately acquainted with † : Such Know-
leges;

* Colof. ii. 3. — Not a mean Degree, but a *Treasure*; not one Treasure, but *many*; not many only, but *all* Treasures, of true Wisdom, and saving Knowledge; are in CHRIST, and his glorious Gospel. — The *superior Excellency* of those Treasures seems to be finely intimated, in that other Expression — *αποκρυφοι* — *hid*; or *laid up*, with the utmost Care, and in a Place of the greatest Safety. Not left at all Adventures, to be *stumbled upon* by every giddy Wanderer, or to *fall into* the Arms of the yawning Sluggard; but, like *Jewels* of the brightest Lustre, or *Riches* of the highest Value, *kept in Store* to adorn and reward the diligent Searcher.

† This, I believe, is the *Import* of the Apostle's Language, though it is not a *literal* Translation of, — *Εἰς α ἐπιθυμῶσιν ἀγγελοι παρακυψαι.* 1 Pet. i. 12. — I never had so lively an Apprehension

lege, as qualifies the Possessor, if not for Offices of Dignity on Earth, yet for the most honourable Advancements in the Kingdom of Heaven. Disunited from which, all *Application* is but *elaborate Impertinence*; and all *Science*, no better than *pompous Ignorance*.—These also contain the *faultless Model* of Duty, and the *noblest Motives* to Obedience. Nothing so powerful to work a *lively Faith*, and a *joyful Hope*, as an attentive Consideration of our LORD's unutterable Merits. Nothing so sovereign to *antidote* the *pestilential Influence* of the World, and *deliver* our Affections from a *Slavery* to ignoble Objects, as an habitual Remembrance of his extreme Agonies.

The

of the beautiful Significancy of the last Word, as when I have attended a *Dissection* of some Part of the *animal Body*. In order to discern the *Minutiae* of the admirable Frame; the *latent Wonders* of Art and Mechanism; the Eye is so sharpened, and its Application so *intensely bended*, as gives a very just *experimental Comment* on that expressive Phrase, *παράκλυσις*.

— With such earnest Attention is the everlasting Gospel contemplated by the *Angelic Orders*! How much more, if it were possible, does it deserve the devout and incessant Consideration of *human Minds*? Since by *them*, it is not only to be *speculated*, as a bright and ravishing Display of the Divine Attributes; but to be *applied* to their fallen Nature, as a most benign Scheme of *recovering Grace*; as the *sure and only Method* of obtaining *Life and Immortality*.

The genuine, the ever-fruitful *Source* of all *Morality*, is the unfeigned Love of CHRIST; and the *Cross*, the CROSS, is the only *Altar*, from which we may fetch a *Coal* *, to inkindle this sacred Fire.

BEHOLD the Man; the matchless and stupendous Man, who gave us a Pattern of the most exalted Virtue, and was Himself the Mirror of every Divine Perfection. Examine the *Memoirs* of his exemplary *Conversation*. Contemplate that *Choir of Graces*, which were associated in his Mind, and shed the highest Lustre on all his Actions. Familiarize to thy Thoughts his heavenly Discourses: Enter into the very Spirit of his *refined Doctrines*; and get the one transfused into thy Breast, the other transcribed in thy Life.—Follow Him to the *last Scene* of the most innocent and useful Course, that was ever passed on Earth. Follow Him to *Calvary's* horrid Eminence, to *Calvary's* fatal Catastrophe: Be thy most constant Attention fixed on that lovely and sorrowful Spectacle. Behold the *spotless Victim*, nailed to the Tree, and stabbed to the Heart. Hear Him pouring out *Prayers* for his *Murderers*, before He poured out his *Soul* for *Transgressors*. See the *Wounds*, that stream
with

with Forgiveness, and bleed Balm for a distempered World. O! see the Justice of the Almighty and his Goodness, his Mercy and his Vengeance, all his *tremendous* and *gracious* Attributes manifested; manifested with inexpressible Splendor, in that most *ignominious*, and yet *grandest*, of Transactions.

SINCE GOD is so inconceivably great, as these his marvellous Works declare;

*Since the great Sovereign sends Ten thousand Worlds **

*To tell us, He resides above them all,
In Glory's unapproachable Recess;*

* For this *Quotation*, and several valuable *Hints*, I acknowledge myself indebted to those beautiful and sublime Poems, intitled *Night-Thoughts*. — Of which I shall only say, That I receive fresh Pleasure, and richer Improvement, from every renewed Perusal. And, I think, I shall have Reason to bless the indulgent Bestower of all Wisdom, for these instructive and animating Compositions, even in my last Moments. Than which, nothing can more emphatically speak their very *superior Excellency*, nor give a more *solid Satisfaction* to their worthy Author. — Happy should I think myself, if these *little Sketches* of contemplative Devotion, might be honoured with the *most inferior* Degree, of the same Success; and receive a Testimony, not from the Voice of Fame, but from the dying Lips of some edified Christian.

What an *honourable*, as well as advantageous *Employ*, is *Prayer*? By *Prayer*, we have *Access* to that most mighty *Potentate*, whose Sceptre sways universal Nature, and whose rich Regalia fill the Skies with Lustre. *Prayer* places us in his Presence-Chamber, while “the Blood of “sprinkling” procures us a gracious Audience. — Shall I then *blush* to be found prostrate before the Throne of Grace? Shall I be *ashamed* to have it known, that I offer up social Supplications in the Family, or am conscientious in observing my private Retirements? Rather let me *glory* in this unspeakable Privilege. Let me reckon it the *noblest Posture*, to *fall* low on my *Knees* before his Footstool; and the *highest Honour*, to enjoy Communion with his most exalted Majesty. — Infinitely more noble, than to sit, in *Person*, on the triumphal Chariot, or to *stand*, in *Effigy*, amidst the Temple of Worthies.

How inestimable, in such a View, is that Promise, which so often occurs in the prophetic Writings, and is the crowning Benefit of the new Covenant, *I will be thy GOD* *? — Will this supremely excellent, and Almighty Being, vouchsafe to be my Portion? To settle upon a poor Sinner, not the *Heritage* of a *County*, not the Possession of the whole *Earth*, but his *own* ever-

* Heb. viii. 10.

ever-blessed *Self*? May I then, through his free condescending Grace, and the unknown Merits of his Son, look upon all these infinitely noble Attributes as my Treasure? May I regard the *Wisdom*, which superintends such a Multitude of Worlds, as my *Guide*; the *Power*, which produced, and preserves them in Existence, as my *Guard*; the *Goodness*, which, by an endless Communication of Favours, renders them all so many Habitations of Happiness, as my exceeding great Reward? — What a Fund of Felicity is included in such a Blessing? How often does the *Israelitish* Prince exult in the Assurance, that this unutterable and boundless Good is his own? Interested in this, he bids *Defiance* to every *Evil*, that can be dreaded; and rests in certain *Expectation* of every *Blessing*, that can be desired. The LORD is my Light, and my Salvation; whom then shall I fear? The LORD, with an Air of Exultation, he repeats both his Affiance, and his Challenge, is the Strength of my Life; of whom then shall I be afraid.*? Nothing so effectual, as this confident and appropriating Faith, to inspire a *Dignity* of Mind, superior to transitory Trifles; or to create a *Calmness* of Temper, unalarmed by vulgar Fears, unappalled

N 2

* Psal. xxvii. 1.

by Death itself. — *The LORD is my Shepherd*, says the same truly gallant and heroic Personage, *therefore shall I lack nothing* *. How is it possible, *He* should suffer Want, who has the *All-sufficient Fulness* for his Supply? So long as unerring Wisdom is capable of *contriving* the Means, and uncontrollable Power is able to *execute* them; such a one cannot fail of being safe and happy; whether he continue amidst the Vicissitudes of Time, or depart into the unchangeable Eternity.

MAY I now and evermore, solace myself in the same everlasting Source of Love, Perfection, and Joy! Grant me this Request, and I ask no more. — Take, ye *Ambitious*, unenvied and unopposed, take to yourselves the *Toys of State*. May I be enabled to *triumph* in that amiable, that adorable, that delightful Name, the LORD my GOD! and I shall scarce bestow a Thought on the splendid Pageantry of the World; unless it be to *despise* its empty Pomp, and to *pity* its deluded Admirers.

ALL these Bodies, though immense in their Size, and almost infinite in their Multitude, are *obedient* to the *Divine Command*. The GOD of Wisdom “tellet^h their Numbers,” and is intimately

* Psal. xxiii. 1.

mately acquainted with their various Properties. The GOD of Power “ calleth them all by their “ Names,” and assigns them whatsoever Office He pleases. — He *marshals* all the *starry Legions*, with infinitely greater Ease, and nicer Order, than the most expert *General* arranges his disciplined *Troops*. He appoints their *Posts*; he marks their *Route*; he fixes the Time for their *Return*. The *Posts*, which he appoints, they occupy, without fail. In the *Route*, which he settles, they persevere, without the least Deviation. And are punctual to the Instant *, which he fixes for their Return. — He has given them a *Law*, which, through a long Revolution of Ages, shall not be broken; unless his sovereign Will interposes for its *Repeal*. Then indeed their *Motions* are controuled, their *Action* is suspended, and their *Influence* sealed up. — The *Sun*, at his Creation, received a Command to travel through the Heavens. Since which, he has constantly performed the great Circuit, and

N 3

“ rejoiced,

* “ The Planets, and all the innumerable Host of “ heavenly Bodies, perform their Courses and Revolutions, with so much Certainty and Exactness, as “ never once to fail; but, for almost 6000 Years, “ come constantly about to the same Period, in the “ hundredth Part of a Minute.” *Stackhouse's Hist. Bib.*

“rejoiced, as a Giant, to run his Race.” But, when it was requisite to subserve the Purposes of Divine Love, the Orders are countermanded; the flaming Courier stops his Career; *stands still in Gibeon* *; and, for the Conveniency of the chosen People, holds back the falling Day.—The *Moon* too was dispatched with a Charge, never to intermit her revolving Motion, till Day and Night come to an End. But, when the Children of Providence were to be favoured with an uncommon Continuation of Light, she halts in her March; makes a solemn Pause *in the Valley of Ajalon* †; and delays to bring on her attendant Train of Shadows.—When the Enemies of

* This is spoken in Conformity to the Scripture Language, and according to the common Notion. With respect to the Power which effected the Alteration, it is much the same Thing, and alike miraculous, whether the Sun or the Earth be supposed to move.

† *Josh. x. 12, 13.* — The Prophet *Habakkuk*, according to his lofty Manner, celebrates this Event, and points out, in very poetical Diction, the Design of so surprising a Miracle. — *The Sun and Moon stood still in their Habitation: In the Light*, the long-continued and miraculous Light, *thy Arrows*, edged with Destruction, *walked* on their awful Errand; *in the clear Shining* of the Day, protracted for this very Purpose, *thy glittering Spear*, launched by thy People, but guided by thy Hand, sprung to its Prey. *Hab. iii. 11.*

of the LORD are to be discomfited, the Stars likewise are levied into the Service; the Stars are armed, and take the Field; *the Stars, in their Courses, fought against Sifera* *.

So dutiful is material Nature; so obsequious, in all her Forms, to her Creator's Pleasure! — The *bellowing Thunders* listen to his Voice, and the *vollied Lightenings* observe the Direction of his Eye. The flying *Storm*, and impetuous *Whirlwind*, wear his Yoke. The *raging Waves*

N 4

revere

* *Judg. v. 20.* — The scriptural Phrase *fought against*, will, I hope, be a proper *Warrant* for every Expression I have used on this Occasion. — The Passage is generally supposed to signify, that some very dreadful *Metecors*, (which the Stars were thought to influence) such as fierce *Flashes of Lightning*, impetuous *Showers of Rain*, and rapid *Storms of Hail*, were employed by the Almighty to terrify, annoy, and overthrow the Enemies of *Israel*. If so, there cannot be a more clear and lively Paraphrase on the Text, than those fine Lines of a *Jewish Writer*. — *His severe Wrath shall HE sharpen for a Sword; and the World shall fight with Him against the Ungodly. Then shall the right-aiming Thunderbolts go abroad; and from the Clouds, as from a well-drawn Bow, shall they fly to the Mark. And Hail-stones, full of Wrath, shall be cast as out of a Stone Bow; and the Water of the Sea shall rage against them; and the Floods (as was the Case with the River Kishon) shall cruelly drown them. Yea, a mighty Wind shall stand up against them; and, like a Storm, shall blow them away.* *Wisd. v. 20, 21, 22, 23.*

revere his Nod ; they shake the Earth, and dash the Skies, yet never offer to pass the Bounds which He has set.—Even the *planetary Spheres*, though vastly *larger* than this wide-extended Earth, are in his Hand as *Clay* in the Hands of the Potter ; though, far *swifter* than the *northern Blast*, they sweep the long Tracts of *Æther*, yet are they *guided* by his *Reins*, and precisely execute whatever He enjoins.—All those enormous *Globes of central Fire*, which beam through the boundless Azure ; in comparison of which, an Army of Planets were like a Swarm of Summer Insects ; those, even those, are conformable to his Will, as the *melting Wax* to the impressed Seal.—And if *all*, *ALL* is *obedient*, throughout the whole Ascent of Things, shall *Man* be the *only Rebel* ? Shall our unruly *Appetites* reject the Government of Almighty Goodness ? Shall these headstrong *Passions* break loose from Divine Restraint ; and run wild, in exorbitant Sallies, after their own Imaginations ?

O MY Soul, be stung with Remorse, and overwhelmed with Confusion, at such a Thought ! Is it not a righteous Thing, that the blessed GOD should sway the Sceptre, with the most absolute Authority, over all the Creatures, which his Power has formed ; especially over those Beings, whom his distinguishing Favour has endued

with the noble Principle of Reason, and made capable of a blissful Immortality? Sure, if all the Ranks of inanimate Existence submit to their Maker's Decree, by the *Necessity* of their Nature; this more excellent Race should pay their equal Homage, by the *willing Compliance* of their Affections *.——Come then, all ye *Faculties* of my

* This Argument, I acknowledge, is not *absolutely conclusive*: But it is *popular* and *striking*. Nor can I think myself obliged, in such a Work, where *Fancy* bears a considerable Sway, to proceed always with the Caution and Exactness of a *Disputer* in the *Schools*. If there be some Appearance of Analogy between the Fact and the Inference, it seems sufficient for my Purpose; though the Deduction should not be necessary, or strictly syllogistical. — One of the *Apostolic Fathers* has an affecting and truly sublime Paragraph, which runs intirely in this Form; Ηλιος τε και σεληνη, ασιρων τε χοροι, κατα την διαταγην αυτην ομοροια, διχχ πασης παρεκβασεως, εξελιαουσιν τις επιτεταγμενες αυτοις ορισμεις. *The Sun, the Moon, and the starry Choir, without the least Deviation, and with the utmost Harmony, perform the Revolutions appointed them by the supreme Decree.* From which Remark, and abundance of other similar Instances observable in the Oeconomy of Nature, he exhorts Christians to a cordial Unanimity among themselves, and a dutiful Obedience to God. Vid. *Clem. Roman. 1. Ep. ad Corinth. Sect. 20.* — See also a beautiful Ode in Dr. *Watts's* Lyric Poems, intituled, *The Comparison and Complaint*, which turns intirely upon this very Thought.

my *Mind*; come all ye *Powers* of my *Body*; give up yourselves, without a Moment's Delay, without the least Reserve, to his Governance. Stand, like dutiful Servants, at his Footstool, in an everlasting Readiness, to *do* whatsoever He requires; to *be* whatsoever He appoints: To further, with *united Efforts*, the Purposes of his Glory in this *earthly Scene*: or else to *separate*, without Reluctance, at his Summons; the *one* to sleep in the silent Dust, the *other* to advance his Honour in some remoter Colony of his Kingdom.—Thus may I join with all the Works of the LORD, in all Places of his Dominion, to recognize his universal Supremacy; and proclaim Him *Sovereign* of *Souls*, as well as *Ruler* of *Worlds*.

THE more attentively I view the crystal Concave, the greater *Number* of Luminaries I discern. Abundance of minuter Lights, that lay concealed from a *superficial Notice*, are visible on a *closer Examination*. Especially in those Tracts of the Sky, which are called the *Galaxy*, and are distinguishable by a Sort of milky Path. *There* they are crouded, rather than disseminated. The Region seems to be all on a Blaze with their blended Rays. They shine thick as *Dew-drops* on the Face of the *Morning*.—Besides this vast

Profusion, which the prying Eye discovers; were I to make my Survey from some other Part of the Globe, the *Northern* or the *Southern Pole*, I should behold a *new Choir* of starry Bodies, which have never appeared in our *Hemisphere*.— And were I, either *Here* or *There*, to view the Firmament with the *Virtuoso's Glass*, I should find a prodigious Multitude of flaming Orbs, that, immersed in Depths of *Æther*, escape the keenest unassisted Sight *.— And yet, in these various Situations, even with the Aid of the Telescopic Tube, I should not be able to descry the Half, perhaps not a *Thousandth Part*, of those illustrious Bodies, which the vast expansive Heavens contain †.—So, the more diligently I pursue
my

* Come forth, O Man, yon azure Round survey,
And view those Lamps, which yield eternal Day.
Bring forth thy Glasses: Clear thy wond'ring Eyes:
Millions beyond the former Millions rise:
Look farther:—Millions more blaze from remoter
Skies.

See an ingenious Poem, intituled, *The Universe*.

† How noble considered in this View, are the Celebrations of the Divine Majesty, which frequently occur in the sacred Writings! *It is the LORD that made the Heavens*. Psal. xcvi. 5. — What a prodigious Dignity, does such a Sense of Things
give.

100 CONTEMPLATIONS

my Search, into those Oracles of eternal Truth, the *Scriptures*; I perceive a wider, a deeper, an ever-increasing *Fund* of *spiritual Treasures*. I perceive the Diviner Strokes of Wisdom, and the richer Displays of Goodness; the more transcendent Excellency of the Messiah, and a more deplorable Vileness in fallen Man; a more immaculate Purity in G O D's Law, and more precious Privileges in his Gospel. And yet, after a Course of Study, ever so assiduous, ever so prolonged, I should have Reason to own myself a mere *Babe* in heavenly Knowledge; a *puerile* Proficient in the *School* of C H R I S T.

AFTER all my most accurate Inspection, those *starry Orbs* appear but as *glittering Points*; and even the *Planets*, though so much nearer our earthly Mansion, seem not to exceed the Size of *flaming Bullets*. If then we have such *imperfect Apprehensions* of visible and material Things, how much more scanty and inadequate must be our Notions of invisible and immortal Objects?

give, to that devout Ascription of Praise; *Thou, even Thou, art L O R D alone; Thou hast made Heaven, the Heaven of Heavens, with all their Host.* Nehem. ix. 6. — And how inimitably sublime is that beautiful Climax, in the inspired Hymn! *Praise H I M, Sun and Moon: Praise Him, all ye Stars of Light: Praise Him, ye Heaven of Heavens.* Psal. cxlviii. 3, 4.

on the STARRY HEAVENS. 101

Objects? — We behold the Stars; and, though every one is incomparably *bigger* than this whole Earth; yet they *dwindle*, upon our Survey, into the most diminutive Forms. Thus, we see by Faith the Glories of the Blessed JESUS; the atoning Efficacy of his Death; the justifying Merit of his Righteousness; and the Joys, which are reserved for the Godly. But, alas! even our most *exalted* Ideas are vastly *below* the Truth: As much below the Truth, as the Report, which our Eyes make of those celestial Edifices, is inferior to their real Grandeur. — Should we take in all the *magnifying Assurances*, which Art has contrived; those luminous Bodies would elude our Skill, and seem as *small* as ever. Should an Inhabitant of Earth travel towards the Cope of Heaven, and be carried forwards, in his aerial Journey, more than a hundred and sixty Millions of Miles*; even in that *advanced Situation*, those *Oceans of Flame* would look no larger than *radiant Specks*. In like Manner, conceive ever so magnificently

* This, incredible, as it may seem, is not a *mere Supposition*, but a *real Fact*. For, about the Tenth of December, we are above 160,000,000 of Miles nearer the Northern Parts of the Sky, than we were at the Tenth of June. And yet, with regard to the Stars situate in that Quarter, we perceive no *Change* in their *Aspect*, nor any *Augmentation* of their *Magnitude*.

magnificently of the Redeemer's *Honours*, and of the *Bliss* which he has purchased for his People, yet you will fall short. Raise your Imagination *higher*; stretch your Invention *wider*; give them *all* the *Scope*, that a soaring and excursive Fancy can take; still your Conceptions will be extremely *disproportionate* to their genuine Perfections.—Vast are the *Bodies*, which roll in the Expanse of Heaven; vaster far are those *Fields* of *Æther*, through which they run their endless Round; but the Excellency of *JESUS*, and the Happiness laid up for his Servants, are greater than *either*, than *both*, than *all*. An inspired Writer calls one, “The unsearchable Riches of *CHRIST*;” and styles the other, “An exceeding great and “eternal Weight of Glory.”

IF those Stars are so many inexhaustible *Magazines* of *Fire*, and immense *Reservoirs* of *Light*, there is no Reason to doubt, but they have some very *grand Uses*, suitable to the Magnificence of their Nature. To specify or explain the particular Purposes they answer, is altogether impossible in our present State of Distance and Ignorance. This however we may clearly discern, that they are disposed in such a manner, as is most *pleasing* and *serviceable* to Mankind.—They are not placed at such an *infinite Remove*, as to lie beyond our Sight;

Sight; neither are they brought *so near* our Abode, as to annoy us with their Beams. We see them shine on every Side, and the deep Azure, that serves them as a Ground, heightens their Splendor. But their Influence is gentle, and their Rays destitute of Heat. So that we are favoured with the View of a Multitude of fiery Globes, without any Risque either to the *Coolness* of our *Night*, or the *Quiet* of our *Rest*.—Who can sufficiently admire that immense Benignity, which, on our Account, *strews* the *Earth* with Blessings of every Kind, and vouchsafes to make the *very Heavens* subservient to our Delight.

BUT it is not solely to *adorn* the Roof of our Palace with costly Gildings, that GOD commands the celestial Luminaries to glitter through the Gloom. We also reap considerable *Benefits* from their Ministry. — They *divide* our *Time*, and fix its solemn Periods. They settle the *Order* of our *Works*; and are, according to the Destination mentioned in Sacred Writ, “for Signs, and for Seasons, for Days, and for Years.” The Returns of Heat and Cold alone would have been too precarious a Rule. But these radiant Bodies, by the *Variation*, and also by the *Regularity* of their Motions, afford a Method of calculating, absolutely certain, and sufficiently

sufficiently obvious. By this the *Farmer* is instructed, when to commit his Grain to the Furrows, and how to conduct the Operations of Husbandry. By this the *Sailor* knows when to proceed on his Voyage, with least Peril; and how to carry on the Business of Navigation, with most Success.

AND why should not the Christian, the *Probationer* for *Eternity*, learn from the same Monitors, how to *number* his *Days*, and duly to transact the Affairs that belong to his Peace? Since GOD has appointed so many *bright Measurers* of our Time, to determine its larger Periods, and to minute down its ordinary Stages; sure, this most strongly inculcates its *Value*, and should powerfully prompt us to *improve* it. — Behold! the supreme Lord marks the Progress of our Life, in that most *conspicuous Kalendar* above. And does not such an Ordination tell us, in the most emphatical Language, That it is given for *Use*, not for *Waste*? That no Portion of it is delivered, but under a *strict Account*; that all of it is entered, as it passes, in the *Divine Register*; and, therefore, that the Stewards of such a Talent are to expect a *future Reckoning*? — Behold! the very Heavens are bidden to be the *Accountants* of our Years, and Months, and Days. O! may this induce us to manage them with a vigilant

vigilant Frugality ; to part with them, as *Misers* with their *boarded Treasure*, warily and circumspectly ; and, if possible, as *Merchants* with their *rich Commodities*, not without their Equivalent, either in personal Improvement, or social Usefulness.

How *bright* the starry Diamonds shine ? The Ambition of *eastern Monarchs* could imagine no Distinction, more noble and sublime, than that of being likened to those beaming Orbs *.—— They form Night's *richest Dress*, and sparkle upon her sable *Robe*, like *Jewels* of the finest Lustre. Like Jewels ! I wrong their Character. The *lucid Stone* has no Brilliancy, quenched is the Flame even of the *golden Topaz*, compared with those glowing Decorations of Heaven. — How widely are their radiant Honours diffused ! No Nation *so remote*, but sees their Beauty, and rejoices in their Usefulness. They have been admired by all *preceding* Generations, and every *rising* Age will gaze on their Charms with renewed Delight.——How *animating* then is that *Promise*, made to the faithful *Ministers* of the *Gospel*, “ They that turn many to Righteousness, shall shine as the Stars for ever and

* Numb. xxiv. 17. Dan. viii. 10.

“ever *.” Is not this a most winning Encouragement “to spend and be spent,” in the Service of Souls? Methinks, the Stars *beckon*, as they *twinkle*. Methinks, they shew me their Splendors, on purpose to awaken my *Alacrity*, in the *Race* set before me; on purpose to enliven my *Activity*, in the *Work* that is given me to do.—If *Honour* has any *Charms*; if true *Glory*, the *Glory* which cometh from G O D, is any *Attractive*; there cannot be a more powerful Incitement, to exercise all *Affiduity* in my holy *Vocation*. Therefore, when *Zeal* becomes *languid*, let me have Recourse to these Lamps of Heaven, and *rekindle* its *Ardor* at their inextinguishable Fires.

OF the *Polar Star* it is observable, that while other *Luminaries* alter their Situation, this seems invariably *fixed* †. While other *Luminaries* now *mount* the *Battlements* of Heaven, and appear upon *Duty*; now *retire* beneath the *Horizon*, and resign, to a *fresh Set*, the *Watches* of the Night; this never departs from its Station.

This, * Dan. xii. 3.

† I speak in Conformity to the *Appearance* of the Object. For, though this remarkable Star revolves round the Pole, its *Motion* is so *slow*, and the *Circle* it describes so *small*, as render both the Revolution, and Change of Situation, hardly perceivable.

This, in every Season, maintains an *uniform Position*, and is always to be found in the same Point of the northern Sky.—How often has *this* beamed bright Intelligence on the *Sailor*, and conducted the Keel to its desired Haven? In early Ages, those that went down to the Sea in Ships, and occupied their Business in great Waters, had scarce any other *sure Guide* for their wandering Vessel: This therefore they viewed with the most solicitous Attention. By this they formed their Observations, and regulated their Voyage. When this was obscured by Clouds, or enveloped in Mists, the trembling Mariner was *bewildered* on the watery Waste. His Thoughts fluctuated, as much as the floating Surge; and he knew not *where* he was advanced, nor *whither* he should steer. But, when this auspicious Star broke through the Gloom, it dissipated the *Anxiety* of his Mind, and cleared up his *dubious Passage*. He re-assumed, with Alacrity, the Management of the Helm; and was able to shape his Course, with some tolerable Degree of Satisfaction and Certainty.

SUCH, only much *clearer* in its *Light*, and much *surer* in its *Direction*, is the *Holy Word* of G.O.D., to those Myriads of intellectual Beings, who are bound for the eternal Shores; and, embarked in a Vessel of frail Flesh, are to pass the

Waves of this perilous World. In all *Difficulties*, these sacred Pages shed an *encouraging Ray*; in all *Uncertainties*, they suggest the *right Determination*, and point out a *proper Procedure*. And, what is still a more inestimable Advantage, they, like the Star which conducted the Eastern Sages, make *plain* our Way to the *Redeemer*. They display his unspeakable Merits; discover the Method of being interested in his Atonement; and lead the weary Soul, *tossed* by Troubles, and *shattered* by Temptations, to that only *Harbour* of peaceful *Repose*. — Let us, therefore, attend to this *unerring Directory*, with the same Constancy of Regard, as the Sea-faring Man observes his Compass. Let us become as thoroughly acquainted with this *sacred Chart*, as the Pilot is with every trusty Mark, that gives notice of a lurking Rock; and with every open Road, that yields a safe Passage into the Port. Above all, let us *commit* ourselves to this *infallible Guidance*, with the same implicit Resignation; let us *conform* to its *Divine Precepts*, with the same sedulous Care; as the Children of *Israel*, when sojourning in the trackless Desert, followed the Pillar of Fire, and the Motions of the miraculous Cloud. — So, will it introduce us, not into an *earthly Canaan*, flowing with Milk and Honey, but into an *immortal Paradise*, where is the Fulness of Joy,

Joy, and where are Pleasures for evermore. It will introduce us into those happy, happy Regions, where *our Sun shall no more go down, nor our Moon withdraw itself; for the LORD shall be our everlasting Light, and the Days of our Mourning, together with the Fatigues of our Pilgrimage, shall be ended* *.

I PERCEIVE a great *Variety* in the Size and Splendor of those Gems of Heaven. Some are of the *first Magnitude*, others of an *inferior Order*. Some *glow* with intense Flames, others *glimmer* with fainter Beams. Yet *all* are *beautiful*; all have their peculiar Lustre, and distinct Use; all tend, in their different Degrees, to enamel the Cope of Heaven, and imbroider the Robe of Night.—This Circumstance is remarked by an *Author*, whose Sentiments are a *Source* of *Wisdom*, and the very *Standard* of *Truth*. “One
“ Star, says the Apostle of the *Gentiles*, *differeth*
“ from another Star in Glory: So also is the
“ Resurrection of the Dead.”

IN the World above are various *Degrees* of Happiness, various *Seats* of Honour. Some will rise to more illustrious Distinctions, and richer

O 3

Joys.

* Isai. lx. 20.

110 CONTEMPLATIONS

Joys *. Some, like Vessels of ample Capacity, will admit *more copious* Accessions of Light and Excellence. And yet there will be no Want, *no Deficiency* in any; but a *Fulness* both of Divine Satisfactions, and personal Perfection. *Each* will enjoy *all* the Good, and be adorned with all the Glory, that his Heart can wish, or his Condition receive. — None will know what it is, to *envy*. Not the least Malevolence, nor the *least Selfishness*, but everlasting Friendship prevails, and a *mutual Complacency* in each other's Delight. Love, *cordial Love*, will give every *particular* Saint a *Participation* of all the Fruitions †, that are diffused through the whole Assembly of the Blessed. — None will *eclipse*, but rather *reflect Light* upon, another. A sweet Interchange of Rays subsists; all enlightened by the great Fountain, and all enlightening one another. By which reciprocal Communication of Pleasure and Amity, each will be continually *receiving from*, each incessantly *adding to*, the general Felicity.

HAPPY,

* 1 Cor. xv. 41, 42. The great Mr. Mede prefers the Sense here given; and the learned Dr. Hammond admits it, into his Paraphrase. Whose joint Authority, though far from excluding any other, yet is a sufficient Warrant for *this* Application of the Words.

† Tolle Invidiam, & tuum est quod habeo: Tolle Invidiam, & meum est quod habes. Augustine.

on the STARRY HEAVENS. III

HAPPY, supremely happy they, who obtain the *most humble* Portion in the celestial Mansions. Better to be a *Door-keeper* in those “ivory Palaces *,” than to fill the most *gorgeous Throne* on Earth. The very lowest Place at God’s Right-hand, is distinguished Honour, and consummate Delight. — O ! that we may *anticipate* something of that blissful State, while we remain in our Banishment below ! May we, *by rejoicing* in the superior Prosperity of another, make it *our own* ! And, provided the *general Result* is Harmony, be content, be pleased, with *whatsoever Part* is assigned to our Share, in the universal Choir of Affairs.

WHILE I am considering the heavenly Bodies, I must not intirely forget those fundamental Laws of our modern Astronomy, *Projection*, and *Attraction*. One of which is the *all-combining Cement*, the other is the *ever-operative Spring*, of the mighty Frame. — In the Beginning, the all-creating F I A T impressed a proper Degree of Motion on each of those whirling Orbs. Which, if not controuled, would have carried them on, in strait Lines, and to endless Lengths, till they were even lost in the Abyss of Space.

O 4

* Psal. xlv. 8.

Space. But, the *gravitating Property* being added to the *projectile Force*, determined their Courses to a *circular * Form*, and obliged the reluctant Rovers to perform their destined Rounds. — Were either of those Causes to suspend their Action, all the harmoniously moving Spheres would degenerate into *torpid Masses*; and, falling into the central Fire, be burnt to *Ashes*: Or else, would exorbitate into *wild Confusion*; and each, by the Rapidity of its Whirl, be *dissipated* into *Atoms*. But, the impulsive

* I am aware, the planetary Orbits are not strictly *circular*, but rather *elliptical*. However, as they are but a small Remove from the perfectly rotund Figure; and partake of it, incomparably more than the Trajectories of the Comets; I choose to represent the Thing in this View. Especially, because the Notion of a Circle is so much more intelligible to the Generality of Readers, than that of an Ellipsis; and because I laid it down for a Rule, not to admit any such *abstruse Sentiment*, or *barbarous Expression*, as should demand a *painful Attention*, instead of raising an *agreeable Idea*. For which Reason, I have avoided *technical Terms*; have taken no notice of *Jupiter's Satellites*, or *Saturn's Ring*; have not so much as mentioned the Names of the Planets; nor attempted to wade into any Depths of the Science; lest, to those that have had no Opportunity of using the *Telescope*, or of acquainting themselves with a *System of Astronomy*, I should propound *Riddles*, rather than *entertaining and edifying Truths*.

pulsive and attractive Energy being most nicely attuned to each other; and, under the immediate Operation of the Almighty, exerting themselves in perpetual Concert; the various Globes run their radiant Races, without the least Interruption or Deviation: So as to create the alternate Changes of *Day* and *Night*, and distribute the useful Vicissitudes of *succeeding Seasons*: So as to answer all the great Ends of a gracious Providence, and procure every comfortable Convenience for universal Nature.

Does not this Constitution of the *material*, very naturally lead the Thoughts to those grand Principles of the *moral* and *devotional* World, *Faith* and *Love*?—These are often celebrated by the inspired Apostle, as a comprehensive Summary of the Gospel *. These inspire the Breast, and regulate the Progress, of each *private Christian*. These unite the *whole Congregation* of the Faithful to GOD, and one another: To GOD, the great Centre, in the Bonds of Gratitude and Duty; to one another, by a reciprocal Intercourse of brotherly Affections, and friendly Offices. — If you ask, why it is impossible for the true Believer, to live at all Adventures; to stagnate in a listless *Inactivity*, or to indulge the *extravagant*

* Col. i. 4. Philem. ver. 5.

114 CONTEMPLATIONS

travagant Excursions of lawless Inclination? — It is owing to “his Faith working by Love*.” He verily trusts, that CHRIST has sustained the Infamy, and endured the Torment, due to his Sins. He firmly relies on that Divine Propitiation, for the Pardon of all his Guilt; and humbly expects everlasting Salvation, as the Purchase of his Saviour’s Merits. This produces such a Set of grateful Sentiments, and such a Spirit of unfeigned Thankfulness, as animate his whole Behaviour. He cannot, he cannot *run to Excess* of Riot, because Love to his adorable Redeemer, like a strong, but silken Curb, sweetly restrains him. He cannot, he cannot *lie lulled* in a *lethargic Indolence*, because Love to the same infinite Benefactor, like a pungent, but indearing Spur, pleasingly excites him.—In a Word; Faith supplies the *powerful Impulse*, while Love gives the *determining Bias*, and leads the willing Feet through the *whole Circle* of GOD’s Commandments. By the united Efficacy of these *heavenly Graces*, the *Christian Conduct* is preserved in the Uniformity and Beauty of Holiness; as by the blended Power of those *Newtonian Principles*, the *solar System* revolves in a steady and magnificent Regularity.

WHEN

* Gal. v. 6.

WHEN I contemplate those *ample* and amazing *Structures*, erected in endless Magnificence, over all the æthereal Plains ; — When I look upon them as so many splendid *Repositories* of *Light*, or green *Abodes* of *Life* ; — When I remember, that, in all Probability, there are *Orbs* vastly *more remote*, than those which appear to our unaided Sight ; *Orbs*, whose *Effulgence*, though travelling ever since the Creation, is *not yet arrived* upon our Coasts * ; — When I stretch my Thoughts to the innumerable *Orders* of *Being*, which inhabit all those spacious Systems ; from the *loftiest Seraph* that surrounds the Throne, to the *puny Nations* which tinge with Blue

* If this Conjecture (which has no less a Person than the celebrated Mr. *Huygens* for its Author) concerning *unseen Stars*, be true ; if, to this Observation be added, what is affirmed by our skilful Astronomers ; that the *Motion* of the *Rays* of Light is so *surprisingly swift*, as to pass through Ten Millions of Miles in a single Minute — How *vast ! beyond Imagination* vast and unmeasurable are the *Spaces* of the *Universe !* — While the Mind is distended with this *grand Idea* ; or rather, while she is dispatching her ablest Powers of piercing *Judgment*, and excursive *Fancy* ; and finds them all *drop short* ; all baffled by the amazing Subject : Permit me to apply that beautiful Exclamation, and noble Remark —

— Say,

116 CONTEMPLATIONS

Blue the Surface of the Plum *, or mantle the standing Pool with Green ; — O ! how various are the *Links* in this immense *Chain* ? How vast the *Gratiations* in this universal *Scale* of Existence ? Yet *all* these, however vast and various, are the *Work* of G O D 's *Hand*, and are full of his *Presence*.

HE rounded in his Palm those dreadfully large Globes, which are pendulous in the Vault of Heaven. He kindled those astonishingly bright Fires, which fill the Firmament with a Flood of Glory. By Him they are suspended in fluid Æther,

— Say, proud Arch,
Built with Divine Ambition ; in Disdain
Of Limit built ; built in the Taste of Heaven !
Vast Concave ! Ample Dome ! Wast thou design'd
A meet Apartment for the D E I T Y ?
Not so : That Thought alone thy State impairs :
Thy *Lofly* sinks ; and shallows thy *Profound* ;
And straitens thy *Diffusive*.

Night-Thoughts, N^o. 9.

* Ev'n the blue Down the purple Plum surrounds,
A living World, thy failing Sight confounds.
To H I M a peopled Habitation shews,
Where Millions taste the Bounty G O D bestows.

See a very beautiful, noble, and instructive
Poem, filed ——— D E I T Y.

Æther, and cannot be *shaken*: By Him they dispense a *perpetual Tide* of Beams, and are never *exhausted*. — He formed, with inexpressible Nicety, that exquisitely fine *Collection of Tubes*; that unknown Multiplicity of *subtle Springs*; which organize and actuate the Frame of the minutest Insect. He bids the crimson Current roll; the vital Movements play; and associates a *World of Wonders*, even in an *animated Point* *. — In all these is a rich Exhibition of *creating Power*;

* There are living Creatures abundantly smaller than the Mite. Mr. Bradley, in his Treatise on Gardening, mentions an *Insect*, which, after accurate Examination, he found to be a *Thousand times less* than the *least* visible Grain of Sand. At the same time declaring, that such an *Animalcule*, though quite imperceptible to the naked Eye, is a *bulky Being*, compared with others almost infinitely more minute, discovered by Mr. *Lewenboeck*. — If then we consider the *several Limbs*, which compose (if I may be allowed the Expression) such an organized Particle: The *different Springs*, which actuate such a Set of Limbs: The *Flow of Spirits*, inexpressibly more attenuated, which put those Springs in Motion: The various *Fluids*, that circulate: The *different Secretions*, that are performed: Together with the proportionable Minuteness of the *Solids*, before they arrive at their *full Growth*: Not to mention other *more astonishing* Modes of Diminution: — Sure, we shall see the utmost Reason to acknowledge, that the adored Maker is *Maximus in minimis*; greatly glorious even in his *smallest* Works.

118 CONTEMPLATIONS

Power; to all these are extended the special Regards of *preserving Goodness*. From hence let me learn to rely on the Providence, and to be ever sensible of the Presence, of the supreme Majesty.

To rely on his *Providence*. — For, not *one Being*, amidst that *inconceivable Number* and *Variety*, which swarm through the Regions of Creation, is overlooked, or neglected, by the great omnipotent *Cause* of all. However *inconsiderable* in its *Character*, or *diminutive* in its *Size*, it is still the Production of the universal Maker, and belongs to the Family of the Almighty Father. — What? Though enthroned Archangels enjoy the *Smiles* of his *Countenance*; yet the low Inhabitants of Earth, the very meanest Worms that creep the Ground, are not excluded from his kind *providential Cares*. Though the *Manifestation* of his *Perfections* is vouchsafed to holy and intellectual Essences; his *Ear* is open to the Cries of the young Raven, and his *Eye* attentive to the Wants, and to the Welfare, of the very meanest Births of Nature. — How much less then are his *own People* disregarded? *Those*, for whom He has delivered his beloved Son to Death, and for whom He has prepared Habitations of eternal Joy. *They* disregarded! No: THEY are “kept as the Apple
“ of

on the STARRY HEAVENS. 119

“ of an Eye ;” the very Hairs of their Head are all numbered ; and the fondest Mother may forget the *Infant*, that is “ dandled upon her Knees,” and sucks at her Breast * ; much sooner than the Father

* *Isai. xlix. 15. Can a Woman forget her sucking Child, that she should not have Compassion on the Son of her Womb? Yea, they may forget; yet will I not forget thee.* — How delicate, and very expressive are the Images, in this charming Scripture? How full of *Beauty*, if beheld in a *critical*, how rich with *Consolation*, if considered in a *believing* View? — Can a *Woman*, one of the softer Sex, whose Nature is most impressible, and whose Passions are remarkably tender — Can such a one, not barely disregard, but intirely forget; not suspend her Care for a while, but utterly erase the very Memory of — *Her Child*; her own Child, not another's; a Child, that was formed in her *Womb*, and is a Part of herself? — *Her Son*; the more important, and therefore more desirable Species; to whom it peculiarly belongs, to preserve the Name, and build up the Family — *Her only Son*; for the Word is singular, and refers to a *Child*, where the Offspring, not being numerous, but centred in a single Birth, must be productive of the fondest Endearment — Can she divest herself of all Concern for such a Child, not when he is grown up to Maturity, or gone abroad from her House; but while he continues in an infantile State, and must owe his whole Safety to her kind Attendance; while he lies in her Bosom, rests on her Arm, and even sucks at her Breast? — Especially, if the poor Creature be racked with Pain, or seized by some
1
severe

Father of everlasting Compassions can *discontinue*, or *remit*, his watchful Tenderness to those, whom He condescends to call, not *Servants*, only, but *Children*.

LET this teach me also a more lively *Sense* of the *Divine Presence*. — All the *rolling Worlds* above; all the *living Atoms* below; together with all the *Beings* that *intervene* betwixt these wide Extremes; are *Vouchers* for an ever-present Deity.

“GOD has not left Himself without Witness.”

There are the Marks of his Footsteps in every Place, and the Touches of his Finger in every Creature. “*Thy Name is so nigh, O Thou all-*

“supporting, all-informing LORD, and that

“do thy wonderful Works declare. Thy Goodness

“warms in the Morning Sun, and refreshes in

“the Evening Breeze. Thy Glory shines in the

“Lamps of Midnight, and smiles in the Blossoms

“of

severe Affliction, and so become an Object of *Compassion*, as well as of Love. Can she hear its piercing Cries, can she see it all restless under its Misery, and feel no Emotions of parental Pity? — Or if one such Monster of Inhumanity might be found; yet can *all* Mothers be so degenerate? This, sure, need never be feared. Much less need the *true Believer* be apprehensive of the *Failure of my Kindness*. An universal Extinction of these strongest Affections of Nature, is a more supposable Case, than that I should ever be unmindful of my People, or regardless of their Interests.

“ of Spring. We see a *Trace* of thy incompre-
 “ henfible *Grandeur*, in the *boundless* Extent of
 “ Things; and a *Sketch* of thy exquisite *Skill*, in
 “ those almost *evanescent* Sparks of Life, the
 “ insect Race.” — O! How stupid is this Heart
 of mine, that, amidst such a Multitude of Re-
 membrancers, thronging on every Side, I should
 forget Thee a single Moment! Grant me,
 Thou great I AM, Thou Source and Support
 of universal Existence, — O! grant me an en-
 lightened Eye, to *discern* Thee in every Object;
 and a devout Heart, to *adore* Thee on every Oc-
 casion. Instead of living *without* GOD in the
 World, may I be ever *with Him*, and see all
 Things *full of Him* *!

If the beautiful Spangles, which a clear Night
 pours on the Beholder's Eye; if those other Fires,

* ————— The glittering Stars,
 By the deep Ear of Meditation heard,
 Still in their Midnight Watches sing of HIM.
 He nods a Calm. The Tempest blows his Wrath.
 The Thunder is his Voice; and the red Flash
 His speedy Sword of Justice. At his Touch
 The Mountains flame. He shakes the solid Earth
 And rocks the Nations. Nor in these alone,
 In every common Instance GOD is seen.

Thompson's Spring.

which beam in remoter Skies, and are discoverable only by, that Revelation to the Sight, the Telescope; if all those *bright Millions* are so many Fountains of Day, enriched with native and independent Lustre, illuminating Planets and enlivening Systems of their own*; O! What *amazing Pomp* is disclosed in the Midnight Scene? What *unknown Riches* are disseminated, through all these numberless Provinces of the great J E H O V A H's Empire?—Yet, immense and endless as they are, there's not the *meanest Slave* but carries incomparably *greater Wealth* in his own Bosom. The *Soul*, that *informs* his Clay,—— the *Soul*, that teaches him to think, and enables him to *choose*; that qualifies him to relish rational Pleasure, and to breathe sublime Desire †;—— the *Soul*, that is possessed of such noble Faculties; and, above all, is endued with the *dreadful*, the
glorious

* Consult with *Reason*. Reason will reply,
 Each *lucid Point* which glows in yonder Sky,
 Informs a *System* in the boundless Space,
 And fills, with Glory, its appointed Place:
 With Beams unborrow'd, brightens other Skies,
 And *Worlds*, to Thee unknown, with Heat and
 Life supplies. *The Universe.*

† In *this* respect, as vested with such Capacities, the Soul even of *fallen Man* has an unquestionable Greatness and Dignity; is *majestic*, tho' in Ruin.

glorious Capacity, of being pained, or blessed for ever — this Soul surpasses in Worth, whatever the Eye can see; whatever, of material, the Fancy can imagine. Before one such intellectual Being, all the most astonishing *Magnificence* of unintelligent Creation, becomes poor and *contemptible* *. — *For this* Omnipotence itself has waked, and worked, through every Age. To *convince* this Soul, the fundamental Laws of Nature have been controuled, and the most amazing Miracles have alarmed all the Ends of the Earth. To *instruct* this Soul, the Wisdom of Heaven has been transfused into the sacred Page, and Missionaries have been sent from the great King, who resides in Light unapproachable. To *sanctify* this Soul, the Almighty Comforter takes the Wings of a Dove, and with a sweet transforming Influence broods on the human Heart. And O! to *redeem*

P 2

this

* I beg Leave to transcribe a pertinent Passage, from that celebrated Master of Reason, and universal Literature, Dr. *Bentley*; whom no one can be tempted to suspect, either tainted with Enthusiasm, or warped to Bigotry. — “ If we consider, says he, the
“ Dignity of an intelligent Being, and put that in
“ the Scale against brute and inanimate Matter, we
“ may affirm, without overvaluing human Nature,
“ that the Soul of one virtuous and religious Man is
“ of greater Worth and Excellency, than the Sun,
“ and his Planets, and all the Stars in the World.”

See his Sermons at *Boyle's* Lect. N^o. 8.

this Soul from Guilt, to rescue it from Hell, the Heaven of Heavens was bowed, and GOD himself came down to dwell in Dust.

LET me pause a Moment upon this important Subject. — What are the Schemes, which engage the Attention of *eminent Statesmen*, and *mighty Monarchs*, compared with the *grand Interests* of an immortal Soul? The *Support of Commerce*, and the *Success of Armies*, though extremely weighty Affairs; yet, if laid in the Balance against the Salvation of a Soul, are lighter than the *downy Feather*, poised against *Talents of Gold*. To save a *Navy* from *Shipwreck*, or a *Kingdom* from *Slavery*, are Deliverances of the most momentous Nature, that the Transactions of Mortality can admit. But O! how they shrink into an inconsiderable Trifle, if (their Aspect upon Immortality forgot) they are set in Competition with the *Delivery* of a *single Soul*, from the Anguish and Horrors of a *distressed Eternity* *!

SINCE such is the Soul's Importance, what *Vigilance* * can be *too much*, or rather what *holy Solitude* can be *sufficient*, for the Overseers of the Saviour's Flock, and the *Guardians* of
such

* Not all yon Luminaries quench'd at once
Were half so sad, as one benighted Mind,
Which gropes for Happiness, and meets Despair.

Night-Thoughts, N^o. 9.

such an unutterably noble *Charge*? — Since such is the Importance of the Soul, wilt thou not, O Man, be watchful for the Preservation of thy own? Shall every *casual Incident* awaken thy Concern, every *transitory Toy* command thy Regard? And shall the Welfare of thy Soul, a Work of *continual Occurrence*, a Work of *endless Consequence*, sue in vain for thy serious Care? — Thy Soul, thy Soul is thy All. If this be *secured*, thou art greatly rich, and wilt be unspeakably happy. If this be *lost*, a whole World acquired, will leave thee in Poverty; and all its Delights enjoyed, will abandon thee to Misery.

I HAVE often been *charmed* and *awed* at the Sight of the nocturnal Heavens; even before I knew how to consider them in their proper Circumstances of *Majesty* and *Beauty*. *Something*, like *Magic*, has struck my Mind, on a transient and unthinking Survey of the æthereal Vault, when tinged throughout with the purest Azure, and decorated with innumerable starry Lamps. I have felt, I know not what, powerful and aggrandizing Impulse, that snatched me from the *low Intanglements* of Vanity, and prompted an ardent Sigh for *sublimier Objects*. Methought, I heard, even from the *silent Spheres*, a *commanding Call*, to spurn the abject Earth, and pant
after

after unseen Delights. — Henceforward, I hope to imbibe more copiously this *moral Emanation* of the Skies; when, in some such Manner as the preceding, they are *rationally seen*, and *duly weighed*. The Stars, I trust, will *teach*, as well as *shine*; and help to dispel, both Nature's Gloom, and my intellectual Darkness. To some, they discharge no higher a Service, than that of holding a *Flambeau* to their *Feet*, and softening the Horrors of their Night. To me, may they be Ministers of a superior Order, and act as *Counsellors* of *Wisdom*, and *Guides* to *Happiness*. Nor will they fail to execute this noble Office, if they gently and gradually light my Way into the *Knowledge* of their adored *Maker*; and point out, with their silver Rays, my *Path* to his beatific *Presence*.

I GAZE, I ponder. I ponder, I gaze; and think ineffable Things.—I roll an Eye of Awe and Admiration. Again and again I repeat my ravished Views, and can never satiate my Sight in this immense Theatre. I spring my Thoughts in Speculation, till even Fancy tires upon her Wing. I find Wonders *ever new*, Wonders more and more *amazing*.—Yet after all my *present Inquiries*, what a mere *Nothing* do I *know*; by all my *future Searches*, how little shall I be able to *learn*, of those
vastly

vastly distant Suns, and their circling Retinue of Worlds? Could I pry with *Newton's* piercing *Sagacity*, or launch into his most extensive *Surveys*: yet, even then, my Apprehensions would be little better, than those dim and scanty Images, which the *Mole*, just emerged from her Cavern, receives on her feeble Optic.—This, sure, should repress all immoderate Thirst after an *Insight* into the *Secrets* of the starry Structures, and make me more careful to cultivate my *Heart*. To fathom the Depths of the Divine Essence, or to scan universal Nature with a critical Exactness, is an Attempt that sets the *acuteſt Philoſopher*, very nearly on a Level with *the Idiot*. Since it is almost, if not altogether, as impracticable by the one, as by the other.

BE it then my chief Study, not to pursue what is absolutely unattainable; but rather to seek what is obvious to find; easy to be acquired; and of inestimable Advantage, when possessed. O! let me seek *that Charity*, which edifieth *; *that Faith*, which purifieth. Love,
bumble

* 1 Cor. viii. 1. I need not inform my Reader, that in this Text; in that admirable Chapter 1 Cor. xiii. and in various other Passages of Scripture; the Word *Charity* is, by no means, to be confined to the particular Act of *Alms-giving*, or external Beneficence.

128 CONTEMPLATIONS

humble Love, and not *conceited Science*, keeps the Door of Heaven. Faith, a *child-like Faith* in JESUS, and not the *haughty self-sufficient Spirit*, which scorns to be ignorant of any Thing, presents a Key to those Abodes of Bliss.— This present State, is the Scene destined to the *Exercise* of *Devotion*; the invisible World, is the Place appointed for the *Enjoyment* of *Knowledge* *. There, the *Dawn* of our *infantile Minds* will be turned into the *Maturity* of perfect *Day*; or rather, there our *midnight Shades* will be brightened into all the *Lustre* of *Noon*. There, the Souls that come from the *School* of Faith, and bring with them the *Principles* of Love, will dwell in Light itself; will be obscured with no Darknes at all; will know even as they are known.— Such an *Acquaintance*, therefore, do I desire to form,

Science. It is of a much more exalted and extensive Nature. It signifies that noble and divine Grace, which *warms* the Soul with a *supreme Love*, to GOD; and *enlarges* it with a *disinterested Affection*, for Men. Which renders it the reigning Care of the Life, and chief Delight of the Heart, to promote the *Glory* of the ONE, and the *Happiness* of the other. — *This, this*, is that Charity, of which so many *excellent Things* are every-where spoken: Which can never be too highly extolled, or too earnestly coveted, since it is the *Image* of GOD, and the very *Spirit* of Heaven.

* 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

form, and to carry on such a Correspondence, with the heavenly Bodies, as may shed a benign Influence on the Seeds of Grace implanted in my Breast. Let the exalted Tracts of the Firmament sink my Soul into deep Humiliation. Let those eternal Fires kindle in my Heart an adoring Gratitude to their Almighty Sovereign. Let yonder ponderous and enormous Globes, which rest on his supporting Arm, teach me an unshaken Affiance in their incarnate Maker. And I shall be — if not wise as the Astronomical Adept, yet WISE UNTO SALVATION.

HAVING now walked, and worshipped, in this *universal Temple*, that is *arched with Skies*, *emblazed with Stars*, and *extended even to Immenfity* — Having cast an Eye, like the inrap-tured Patriarch *, an Eye of Reason and Devotion, through the magnificent Scene; with the one, having discovered an *Infinitude of Worlds*, and with the other, met the Deity in every View — Having beheld, as Moses in the flaming Bush, a *Glimpse of JEHOVAH's Excellencies*, reflected from the Planets, and streaming from Myriads of celestial Luminaries — Having read various Lessons in that stupendous *Book of Wisdom*, where unmeasurable Sheets of Azure compose

VOL. II.

Q

the

* Gen. xv. 5.

the Page; and Orbs of Radiance write, in everlasting Characters, a *Comment* on our *Creed*. — What remains, but that I close the *midnight Solemnity*, as our LORD concluded his grand Sacramental Institution, with a *Song of Praise*? — And behold a Hymn, suited to the *sublime Occasion*; indited by *Inspiration itself*; transferred into our Language, by * one of the *highest* and *happiest* Efforts of human Ingenuity.

*The spacious Firmament on high,
With all the blue æthereal Sky,
And spangled Heav'ns, a shining Frame,
Their great Original proclaim:
Th' unwear'd Sun, from Day to Day,
Does his Creator's Pow'r display,
And publishes, to ev'ry Land,
The Work of an Almighty Hand.*

*Soon as the Ev'ning Shades prevail,
The Moon takes up the wond'rous Tale,
And nightly, to the list'ning Earth,
Repeats the Story of her Birth:
While all the Stars, that round her burn,
And all the Planets in their Turn,
Confirm the Tidings as they roll,
And spread the Truth from Pole to Pole.*

7 OC 63

What,

* Addison, *Spect.* Vol. VI. N^o. 465.

*What though, in solemn Silence, all
Move round the dark terrestrial Ball?
What though, nor real Voice nor Sound
Amid their radiant Orbs be found?
In Reason's Ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious Voice,
For ever singing, as they shine,
The Hand, that made Us, is divine.*

F I N I S.

E R R A T A.

Starry Heavens. Page 21. last Line, Not. read
Toys. p. 23. l. 20. r. *transient.* p. 44. l. 1. r. *in.*

